

The Worlds of Eastern Christianity, 300–1500
Volume 6

Languages and Cultures of Eastern Christianity:
Greek

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THE WORLDS OF EASTERN CHRISTIANITY, 300–1500

General Editors: Robert Hoyland and Arietta Papaconstantinou

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THE WORLDS OF EASTERN CHRISTIANITY, 300–1500

Volume 6

Languages and Cultures of Eastern
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edited by
Scott Fitzgerald Johnson

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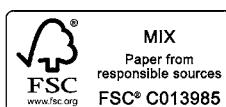
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To Margaret Mullett

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General Editors' Preface

Christianity very quickly expanded beyond its narrow Palestinian confines, spawning different versions of itself as it went. By the seventh century, Christian communities were to be found as far apart as Ireland and China. Such a situation makes a mockery of any simple division into Western and Eastern Christianity, and certainly it makes more sense to accept that even quite shortly after the life of Christ there were many Christianities across Eurasia that differed in innumerable subtle and not so subtle ways. Yet lines must be drawn if one is ever to achieve anything more than a superficial survey and often, as here, there is a need to shed light on a relatively neglected area of study. For the purposes of this series, therefore, 'Eastern Christianity' will refer to those forms of Christianity that evolved in the Middle East in the period 300–1500, excluding the forms of Christianity that grew up in the Slavic world and the lands east of Iran.

Besides the fact that the Christianity of this region and period has received less attention than the Christian communities of Europe, which deserves redress, it is also true to say that Christianity in the Middle East developed along very different lines to Christianity elsewhere, evolving its own distinctive forms and identities. In the first place, it was heir to Greek culture in a very intimate way, for all the principal Hellenistic cities were to be found in this region and the Greek language and literature continued to predominate there until at least the seventh century CE. Secondly, the linking of religion and imperial power that followed on from the conversion of Constantine the Great affected the Middle East much more than Europe, since the majority of the great urban sees of the Roman Empire were located in the East, and this became even more true after the fall of Rome in the fifth century CE and the consequent decline of urban culture in the West. Thirdly, the Middle East was a land of very ancient civilizations, with many different groups of very diverse linguistic, ethnic and religious traditions. This, combined with the second point, gave rise to a series of confrontations between the imperial position and the position of those communities that wanted to maintain a certain distance from the imperial authorities, the result of which was a number of subtly distinguished doctrinal positions that served to reinforce and articulate the pre-existing differences. Fourthly, in the seventh century there occurred in the Middle East the event that most strongly defined Eastern Christianity, namely the rise of Islam. This saw Christians revert from being a ruling majority to, over time, a ruled minority – one that had to come to terms not only with loss of political power and patronage, but also with the ideological challenge of a new and successful monotheism. These four reasons, along with numerous features of climate, topography and human geography that are unique to the Middle East, meant that the Christians of the region evolved a distinctive culture, the main aspects of which will be presented in these volumes. The

period covered, 300–1500 CE, is inevitably to some degree arbitrary, but its general parameters do encompass the key events of the formation of Eastern Christianity. The starting point is marked by the accession of Constantine the Great, in recognition of the immense changes that his conversion set in train in this region. There is no natural end point – indeed, Eastern Christianity is still changing and adapting today – but, with the fall of Constantinople in 1453 CE, the last vestiges of Christian rule in the East were swept away and with them went any hope of a *reconquista* and a return of a Christian polity.

As noted above, Eastern Christianity is much less known and studied than its Western counterpart that grew up in an emerging Europe, and it is the principal aim of this series to redress this deficiency and to provide a foundation for new research. Distance from Europe is not, however, the only reason for the relative neglect of the topic. East Christian studies were born in the Vatican of the early modern period, when the See of Rome was trying to attract the Middle Eastern churches to Catholicism. This legacy has left traces in subsequent research to this day, fostering an approach that has been overwhelmingly theological and philological, often disguised as 'oriental' or 'biblical' studies. Originating, as it did, from different disciplines, scholarly production is very scattered across frequently obscure publications that are difficult to access by those who have no specialized library at hand. In addition, the multicultural and multilingual world of late antique and medieval Eastern Christianity has quite naturally created compartmentalized clusters of scholars, defined and divided by various linguistic and subject specialities, to the point that students of the same bilingual society have worked separately on the sources available in each language.

This series seeks to address these problems by making available some of the most influential research published to date on a selection of subjects – works that have been central to the way in which we have come to define and understand Eastern Christianity. Reflecting what has long been the most common approach, a first set of volumes will present the language, literature and history of the various East Christian communities; a second series will, however, take a thematic approach, so that a number of different topics prominent in modern scholarly literature can be dealt with in a way that crosses the various cultural and linguistic boundaries. This will permit a reframing of the fragmented and static view that research to date has tended to give of the east Christian world – and behind it, of the early Islamic empire which these communities populated. The series as a whole will, it is hoped, serve as a starting point for a more holistic approach to Eastern Christianity.

Robert Hoyland
University of Oxford
Arietta Papaconstantinou
University of Reading

Editor's Preface

When asked to prepare the Greek volume for the Languages and Cultures of Eastern Christianity series I accepted precipitately. Thrilled to be a part of this pioneering endeavor, I gave too little thought to what might be required to do the subject justice. A more sober response would have acknowledged the patent impossibility of writing a *short* Introduction on, expressed as simply as possible, 'the role of the Greek language in the late antique, Byzantine, and Islamic Near East among Christians whose mother tongue was not Greek, or not solely Greek'. The subject is enormous: Greek was neither an ethnic nor a sectarian language in the Christian Near East, which meant, in effect, that every culture of the region had a claim on its use, value, and development. As my Introduction to this volume became increasingly long, the series' editors, Robert Hoyland and Arietta Papaconstantinou, whose vision of a multilingual Near East drives the series, were unflinching in their encouragement to finish, no matter how many pages it took to tell the story.

I was given some limits to this endeavor, however, which have helped to shape the volume and to focus the Introduction's argument. First, I was asked not to select articles for inclusion which had previously been reprinted by Ashgate/Variorum. This meant many fundamental articles were unavailable to me, but it also meant that I could range widely and include several chapters translated specifically for this book. On balance, this limitation has resulted in a less predictable and more dynamic collection of scholarship, to its benefit. Second, I was instructed not to discuss Greek in Constantinople or Asia Minor: this was to be in some ways an 'anti-Byzantine' project. Even so, its *raison d'être* arises partly from the fact that Byzantine Studies has been steadily moving to encompass the Christian East – a region which older scholarship paradoxically called 'the Byzantine Orient', even as it was under Islamic rule. In other words, while I was asked to remain technically non-Byzantine in terms of content, I have tried to redefine for my purposes what it could mean to study Byzantine Greek, shifting the focus away from the capital and its monolingual Greek writers. This restriction produced an Introduction that was much more difficult to write, but one which, I am convinced, is more interesting to read.

The diverse valence of Greek, in terms of its social and cultural presence, in this circumscribed arena is arresting and not at all a simple phenomenon to explain. Surely this is the primary reason no one has attempted a survey like this before. Longue-durée studies like Siméon Vailhé's 'Origines religieuses des Maronites' (1900–1902) and 'L'église maronite du Ve au IXe siècle' (1906) or Joseph Nasrallah's *Histoire du mouvement littéraire dans l'église melchite du Ve au XXe siècle* (1979) traced specific ecclesiastical bodies, from a confessional point of view, from their origins in a Greek milieu, through multiple turns of language under medieval Islam, down to the modern era. While I attempt here a study

that exceeds the boundaries of a single confession, Vailhé and Nasrallah are models for my own work, especially in the following two ways: first, they dealt with multiple eastern Christian languages simultaneously, since their subject matter required it. Second, they recognized that the scribal activities of copying and translation are paramount to the history of Christian literature in the East. We know so much more about what was available to eastern Christian readers than we do for those in Constantinople in this same period. This is largely because of the numerous colophons which discuss scribal work and the movement of manuscripts. This movement is geographical but it is also linguistic, in the sense that texts moved in and out of several languages – Greek into Syriac, or Georgian into Greek, for instance – and the translators, scribes, and readers were all acutely aware of the linguistic territory of eastern Christianity.

By focusing on material remains – such as papyri and manuscripts, and also texts in modern critical editions stemming from those papyri and manuscripts – I have intentionally eschewed anecdotal evidence about language use. This choice makes my Introduction to the volume less sensational, for sure, but hopefully more grounded and verifiable. For instance, when in a famous passage from his Greek *History of the Monks of Syria* (21.15), Theodoret of Cyrrhus claims that a demon came to him at night and threatened him, in Syriac, to stop punishing heretics, how are we to interpret the fact that Syriac is the demonic language of choice? Honestly, it is anyone's guess. Theodoret, as we will see, knows Syriac intimately and does not elsewhere attach any obvious negative value to it vis-à-vis Greek. So, ought we not to seek a more localized and/or essentially literary explanation for that famous scene and not use this anecdote to generalize about Theodoret's (or his diocese's) linguistic proclivities? Taking such anecdotes out of a material or literary-historical context is dangerous. By contrast, I have preferred, in solidarity with the articles chosen for this volume, to focus on the material fabric of language use and, within that category, especially written texts which, where possible, have an ancient manuscript history. In this regard I recognize that inscriptions could have been more prominent in my survey. However, epigraphic evidence is notoriously difficult to employ as a gauge for language use, due to its public and performative nature. One might object that the papyrological record in Egypt has its own dangers, which is true. However, especially when it comes to multilingualism, late antique papyri from Egypt have been much more adequately theorized for Greco-Coptic than has epigraphy (or papyri for that matter) in Greek and Syriac from greater Roman Syria.

Given all these caveats, I have chosen the modest title of 'The Social Presence of Greek' for my Introduction, by which I mean the valence given to Greek by various groups and individuals in the Levant, Mesopotamia, and Egypt in Late Antiquity and Byzantium. Who knew Greek? What did they say about it? What did they *not* say about it? At what times and places was it a loaded topic, or hardly a concern? Was it a colonialist language? A subaltern language? The social presence of Greek is very difficult to pin down. Modern scientific approaches to contact linguistics, bilingualism, language acquisition, etc. tend to falter in antiquity on the lack of adequate evidence. Even when there is abundant evidence, often it is not the right type for such approaches. Indeed, I

have kept to a relatively small compass given the linguistic variety of the region. Greek, Syriac, and Coptic have been my test beds. At times I also discuss Christian Palestinian Aramaic (CPA), Armenian, Old Georgian, and Latin as vehicles for understanding the social presence of Greek. For the most part I have left to one side the evidence of Arabic, Ethiopic, Old Nubian, and Sogdian. Likewise, Old Church Slavonic is outside my purview here but it has a related and important transmission history, especially via Mt. Athos. The ideal scholar of this subject would be able to move between all these languages and literary traditions fluidly.

I have tried to signal the importance of multilingualism for the whole of the First Millennium CE. The First Millennium as a concept is generating vibrant discussion and debate currently. For example, it undergirds Garth Fowden's recent book *Before and after Muhammad: The First Millennium Refocused* (2014). Unfortunately, his book was published only at the latest stages of this volume, and I have not been able to take account of it in my Introduction. I concur with Fowden's general claim that only when the long view is taken can the evidence of any one decade, one century, or one geographical or social milieu be understood in proper perspective, particularly with regard to the tectonic shifts of language and religion which still shape our world today. Unlike Fowden, however, it is not my goal in this book to assess the Islamic conquest or even the status that Greek had among Muslims. I will be the first to acknowledge that Arabic could have played a larger role in my analysis.

My particular interests and training, however, bring other points into the discussion. Above all, I would emphasize here that if Coptic is left out of the equation of the First Millennium – as it is in *Before and after Muhammad* as well as in Fergus Millar's most recent book, *Religion, Language, and Community in the Roman Near East: Constantine to Muhammad* (2013) – a very unbalanced picture of the social presence of Greek among eastern Christians emerges. Coptic and Greek had a very different relationship to one another than Syriac and Greek did. Some principles still hold – for the most part Coptic bishops at the Ecumenical Councils spoke in Greek, like nearly all of their eastern counterparts – but, in Egypt, Coptic had a definitive impact on the development of Greek within that space, even at the fundamental level of linguistic interference and borrowing, much more so than Syriac or Arabic had a linguistic impact on Greek in the same period.

Even still, generalizations hardly do justice to the varied surviving evidence, as will be seen. To a great degree, the social presence of Greek can be defined precisely by its changing or unsteady image. The question of whether this unsteady image is either the accidental result of the surviving evidence or is an accurate picture of volatile language use in Late Antiquity is precisely the fault line of the current debate and is the question to which I try to stay very close throughout. With this in mind, I have included a broader range of evidence and locales, over a longer period of time, than most studies have employed to date. This means that my Introduction is wider than it is deep in some places. Detail is sometimes sacrificed for the larger picture. If my approach is defensible in this case, it will be because I have tried to offer a provocation to further research, specifically a provocation to treat Greek in the Christian East as its own field

of study. After all, even though it is long, my Introduction which follows is only that: an introduction to a set of very important articles that have laid the groundwork for the type of study envisioned. It is not a comprehensive sifting of the evidence, and many things have been left to the side. Still, if this book can find a readership among scholars of the eastern Mediterranean who consider the region's multilingual pluralism to be valuable and exciting, and who might take up the subject of the dynamic role of Greek in the East for themselves, then it will have done its work.

While this book began at the invitation of Robert Hoyland and Arietta Papaconstantinou, my commissioning editor at Ashgate, John Smedley, was equally supportive throughout and was instrumental in conceiving the series as a whole. The production editor, Rosalind Ebdon, was generous beyond measure in dealing with numerous adjustments, and, once it was set, Leslie MacCoull proofread the entire book with the sharpest of eagle-eyes. It was a pleasure to work again with the inimitable Kate Mertes, who produced the valuable index at the end of this book. I would like to thank these colleagues for their camaraderie and their assistance with challenges big and small. Strategizing about this volume with Arietta and Robert over the past few years has been a pleasure, and it is my honor to give them as much credit as possible for its scholarly value.

Portions of my Introduction were presented in various stages of completion at the following venues: Dumbarton Oaks, the Catholic University of America, the University of Pennsylvania, Columbia University, Brandeis University, the Institute for the Study of the Ancient World (NYU), the Byzantine Studies Conference, and the Society of Biblical Literature. Thank you to the departments and audiences on those occasions for their hospitality and intellectual engagement. I am especially grateful for the honor of being invited to give the Procope Costas Distinguished Lecture at Brooklyn College in 2013 on the subject of this book. Brian Sowers and the members of the Classics department at Brooklyn College were the most genial of hosts. The Dumbarton Oaks Library staff, Deb Brown in particular, has been unfailingly helpful in obtaining obscure items on my behalf. Three research assistants from Georgetown University lent their able hands to the project: my thanks go to Michael Lessman, Alec Luhring, and Jimmy Wolfe, as well as to Georgetown for funding their work. Michael Maas read the Introduction at an early stage and offered invaluable recommendations for its trajectory and argument. Other scholars in the Washington, DC area have made important contributions at various stages: I am grateful to Vince Bantu, Jennifer Barry, Monica Blanchard, Doug Boin, Antoine Borrut, Gudrun Bühl, Sam Collins, Ed Cook, Örgü Dalgıç, Jennifer Davis, Marek Dospěl, Sidney Griffith, John Hanson, Ky Heinze, Joel Kalvesmaki, Bill Klingshirn, Lilla Kopár, Wendy Mayer, Yuliya Minets, Dana Robinson, Philip Rousseau, Irfan Shahîd, Jonathan Shea, Stephen Shoemaker, Alice-Mary Talbot, Shawqi Talia, Natalia Teteriatnikov, Janet

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My wife, Carol, and our three children, Susanna, Daniel, and Thomas, have remained a daily inspiration in my life. I cannot imagine this or any other book getting finished without them.

Scott Fitzgerald Johnson
June 2014
Washington, DC

Introduction

The Social Presence of Greek in Eastern Christianity, 200–1200 CE

I. INTRODUCTION

In the opening chapter of the first volume of his posthumously published *History of Byzantine Literature*, Byzantine historian Alexander Kazhdan asks the following question: ‘can we [as Byzantinists] imagine Byzantine literature without John Damaskenos?’¹ His answer to the question is a clear ‘No, we can’t’, but his chosen example is an especially provocative one, since John of Damascus (c.675–c.753/4) spent his entire career within territory under Arab Muslim rule, yet seems to have written solely in Greek. Beyond translations of these Greek works, nothing from his own hand survives today in Syriac or Arabic, if he wrote in these languages at all. Further, John of Damascus’ influence on Byzantine Orthodox theology was immense. There is, as Kazhdan intimates, no doubting his Byzantine or Orthodox renown, not least on the subject of icons, but on much else besides.² However, for Kazhdan, the most recent champion of the pursuit of *longue-durée* Byzantine literary history, the nagging question still remains: did any contemporaries in eighth-century Constantinople really know or care about John of Damascus’ writings and, if not, is he truly a ‘Byzantine’ author?

This study seeks to turn Kazhdan’s rhetorical question on its head by focusing exclusively on Greek Christian literature written outside the immediate environs of Constantinople and Asia Minor. It devotes sustained attention, diachronically and synchronically, to the social presence of Greek among the cultures and institutions of ‘eastern Christianity’, that is, groups of Christians whose primary language was not Greek, but who interacted with Greek to one degree or another. This is a historical problem concerning the definition of Byzantium during the early medieval period. Historians of Byzantine thought – particularly Byzantine thought about itself – have come to very different conclusions about the role of John of Damascus and the larger constituency he represented (that is, non-Byzantine Byzantines). This debate partly comes down to how historians interpret language use and the social value of language in the Byzantine East. Was Greek essential to the very character of

¹ Kazhdan 1999–2006, 1.3.

² For a recent biography of John of Damascus that emphasizes his Byzantine legacy, see Louth 2002. The treatment of John of Damascus below is different in focus.

Byzantium? Or, conversely, did Greek in the lost eastern provinces mean something different to its speakers or readers *in situ* than it did in the capital?

For some readers, it may seem patently obvious that Greek Christian writing is a part of ‘eastern Christianity’: after all, the phrase ‘eastern Orthodoxy’ is common enough today and usually includes Greek-speaking Christians. Other readers, however, may feel Greek to be so firmly linked to Byzantium that ‘eastern Christianity’ is much too broad a label, preferring instead the traditional denominational labels ‘Greek Orthodoxy’ and ‘Oriental Orthodoxy’.³ Both of these reactions are faulty, however, and do not leave room for the variety of interactions and self-definitions among the many strands of eastern Christianity.

The interplay between the Greek literature written in the East and that written in Constantinople is one of the most interesting aspects of the history of Byzantine Greek – there is no denying that Constantinople mattered to the Greek of ‘eastern Christianity’. On the other hand, Greek as a language and a cultural touchstone in the Middle East was foundational and shared: it was more than the ‘language of Constantinople’, more than simply one language among equals in the medieval Mediterranean. Greek is crucial to the history of Christianity *ab initio* and *in toto*. Moreover, as a symptom of Greek’s shared history, Constantinople’s hegemony over the Greek heritage was contested again and again during Late Antiquity and Byzantium. One oft-cited example of this dynamic is the variation in levels of attachment to Greek among Syriac Christian authors. According to the standard narrative, Syriac authors’ attitudes toward Greek moved from bilingual co-existence in Edessa (Syr. *Urhai*; mod. Urfa), the capital of the Roman province of Osrhoene, around 200 CE, to ‘antagonism’ in the works of Ephrem the Syrian (d. 373), to ‘assimilation’ (even Hellenolatry) in the seventh-century Syriac translations of the Greek Bible, the *Syro-Hexapla* Old Testament, and the Harklean New Testament.⁴

The artificiality of the present experiment – a study on Greek literary history that intentionally limits its geographical framework of analysis – provides an exciting vantage point to view the vibrancy of the Greek language (and language and literature in general) from 200–1200 CE. Moreover, while the vibrancy will become obvious very quickly, the immensity of this task is perhaps even more obvious, to the degree that one could defensibly claim that a literary history of Greek among eastern Christians is impossible or, at least, is not yet ready to be written. Too few authors in this category have received dedicated studies; too few texts have received commentaries; and too little linguistic work has been done to pose even a provisional dichotomy between ‘eastern Greek’ and ‘Constantinopolitan Greek’. While some modern work has been done to advance our knowledge of the frameworks of Greek from a formal, linguistic point of view – either diachronically

³ On the topic of ‘orientalism’ as it relates to western views of Byzantium, see Averil Cameron 2003; 2007; 2008.

⁴ See below and Brock 1982.

(Horrocks 2010) or delimited by corpus (Gignac 1976) – the informal, cultural role of the language remains a desideratum among historians. Therefore, the present attempt to write an evocative survey of language interaction among eastern Christians will be necessarily preliminary and far from comprehensive.

Nevertheless, while many stones must be left unturned, the conclusion of this study is attainable even through an examination of a small portion of the surviving evidence. In short, I will argue that scholars of other eastern Christian languages – Aramaic, Syriac, Coptic, Armenian, Georgian, Ethiopic, Arabic (and Karshuni), Old Nubian, Caucasian Albanian, Sogdian – have a major role to play in defining the study of Greek in the East. Furthermore, it is increasingly clear today that a Hellenist writing a history of Greek literature in the late antique and Byzantine worlds will need to have ready access to more ancient languages than just Greek and Latin. Such a conclusion is not meant to threaten obliquely that such a literary history can never be written but, rather, to encourage (even demand) the coexistence of Greek and eastern Christian languages in the future work of Classicists, Byzantinists, and scholars of Late Antiquity.

II. GREEK AS A GIVEN

The intellectuals and writers of eastern Christianity in Late Antiquity and Byzantium (here defined as c. 200–1200 CE) very often knew Greek, even if it was often not their native language. Greek was not their ‘mother tongue’, but it was not quite a ‘father tongue’ either, in the way that learned Latin continued to thrive among contemporary western scholars who spoke vernacular from birth.⁵ Greek was not linguistically fossilized, as Latin became; but it also did not produce any derivative vernaculars as natural heirs (such as Old French). Rather, Greek continued to be spoken with fluency and to evolve as a living language in the cities of the Levant, Mesopotamia, and Egypt. This was true even into the period when Arabic had become *both* the mother tongue and the intellectual lingua franca of eastern Christians.⁶ In this world, many eastern Christian languages continued to be natively spoken and to thrive in their own liturgies and local communities. They all, in one way or another, had deep Hellenic roots and belonged, at least *in nuce*, more to the Mediterranean *oikoumene* than to the Near East. (I am speaking here of intellectual content and cultural associations rather than historical linguistics.) New Christian theological writing in Greek *in the East* became a seemingly rare

⁵ For the concept of Latin as a ‘father tongue’, see Ziolkowski 1996.

⁶ On Arabic as a lingua franca among eastern Christians in the Islamic world, see Griffith 2008.

phenomenon after the turn of the ninth century. However, that is not to say such phenomena did not exist, if one knows where to look.

Instead of attempting to comprehend the whole of our subject under one roof, we should abandon the imperial persona of Byzantium for a moment and try to allow the authors and texts to speak up in their own local cultural dialects.⁷ This approach brings the benefit of exploring religious divisions between Christian groups. As one might expect, Greek became, following the Ecumenical Councils of the fifth century (Ephesus, 431; Chalcedon, 451), a signifier of Orthodoxy and was, as a consequence, the chosen medium of Chalcedonian monasteries in the East. This was true especially of the most famous monastery in Palestine, St Sabas, as well as the monastery of St Catherine in Sinai. In those two cases, along with the Black Mountain outside Antioch, as we will see, Greek was associated with the monasteries partly because of their theological commitments but also because, ecclesiastically, the Patriarchate of Jerusalem was, from an early stage and throughout the whole of Byzantium, in regular communication with the Patriarchate of Constantinople, and therefore under the emperor, even while ‘under siege’ in the Holy Land. The term ‘melkites/melchites’ (Greek, *melchitai*) – a late eighth-century coinage – comes ultimately from the Aramaic *malkā*, ‘king’, translating the Greek *basileus*, ‘emperor’; they were, we might say, theological royalists (*basilikoi*).⁸ ‘Melkite’ was a derogative label applied to them by their non-Chalcedonian co-religionists in the East. In this sense, therefore, Greek had already become by the seventh century in some eyes a marker of alterity or imperial meddling in the midst of indigenous Christian cultures (living under, I might add, a completely different imperial power, the Islamic Caliphate). This was the case even while it is abundantly clear that many of these melkite monks knew a dialect of Aramaic, and some of them may have spoken only Aramaic (or later Arabic), despite their allegiance to Constantinople.

To further emphasize this programmatic statement, it is worth recalling that oft-cited passage from the western pilgrim Egeria’s visit to the Holy Land in 381–384. She was present at the Holy Week liturgy in one of those three years and describes a remarkable fact: the lessons and homilies of the Easter liturgy at the Church of the Anastasis in Jerusalem were read out in both Greek and ‘Syrian’, and translations into Latin were made *ad hoc* for those who needed them. The famous passage is worth quoting in full:

⁷ On the inherent colonialism of Byzantine literature, see Averil Cameron 2003. On the larger question of Byzantine colonialism and diplomacy, see the classic study of the ‘Byzantine Commonwealth’ in Obolensky 2000 [1971].

⁸ On the definition of *Melchitai* in the Umayyad period, see Griffith 2001a; 2006; and Nasrallah 1979. The term ‘melkites/melchites’ today means something different; namely, it signifies ecclesiastically the Christians under the Eastern Rite Catholic Patriarchate of Antioch. The ancient melkites are today called Rūm Orthodox.

Seeing as a portion of the populace in this province knows both Greek (*grece*) and ‘Syrian’ (*siriste*), another portion knows Greek only (*per se grece*), and a third portion knows ‘Syrian’ only (*tantum siriste*), the bishop, though he may know ‘Syrian’ (*siriste*), nevertheless always speaks in Greek (*grece*) and never in ‘Syrian’ (*nunquam siriste*). Therefore, a priest stands beside him who, as the bishop is speaking in Greek (*grece*), translates into ‘Syrian’ (*siriste*), so that everyone can understand what he means. Similarly, someone stands ready for the lessons read in church – because they have to be read in Greek (*grece*) – to interpret them into ‘Syrian’ (*siriste*) so that the people learn them. Of course, there are also a certain number of Westerners (*latini*) here who know neither ‘Syrian’ nor Greek (*nec siriste nec grece*), but there is no need for them to be discouraged, since there are some brothers and sisters who speak Latin as well as Greek (*alii fratres et sorores graecolatini*) who will explain [everything] to them in Latin (*latine*).⁹

Throughout this quotation I have translated the Latin adverb *siriste* as ‘Syrian’ because it is usually argued that the language meant here is not Syriac but Christian Palestinian Aramaic (CPA).¹⁰ However, unlike Syriac, there is no documented CPA from before the fifth century,¹¹ and Egeria obviously knows the language is named after the Roman province of Syria (north of Jerusalem, though not Osrhoene). Thus, there may be good reason to think of *siriste* as meaning Syriac that has migrated to Jerusalem from Edessa, but this is conjecture. Given these difficulties, the closest approximation I can offer here is ‘Syrian’.

This fascinating account can thus serve as a confirmation of a type of trilingualism of the Jerusalem church in the late fourth century. However, we need to be specific. ‘Trilingualism’ here means simply the *coexistence* of Greek, Latin, and a dialect of Aramaic; it does not mean simultaneous comprehension by a single person in three languages.¹² None of those present seem to have been able to speak all three

⁹ Egeria *Itinerarium* 47.3–4 (ed. Maraval 2002b, 314). All translations in this study are my own unless otherwise noted.

¹⁰ Griffith 1997b, 16–24.

¹¹ Millar 2007, 107. See Müller-Kessler 1991; 1999.

¹² Spoken trilingualism in the fourth-century East may have been Jerome’s unique achievement, that is, in Greek, Latin, and Aramaic/Hebrew: cf. Rebenich 1993; and Kamesar 1993. There is evidence from later pilgrim narratives that the Greek-Latin-Aramaic multilingual environment persisted in some form in Jerusalem into the fifth and even to the early sixth centuries. However, from the time that Latin was officially (and belatedly) dropped as an imperial medium of communication in the middle of the sixth century, medieval western pilgrims, such as Willibald of Eichstätt in the eighth century, presumably had to travel with their own bilingual or trilingual translators (Latin, Greek, and Aramaic or Arabic); they could not assume they would meet gracious, expat Latin speakers who could lead them around. On the continued value of Latin for public documents, legal and

languages simultaneously. To be sure, there were plenty of bilinguals present: being either Greek and Aramaic speakers, or *graecolatini* (as Egeria calls them) who could speak both Greek and Latin. In other words, it seems there were no people present who could speak Greek, Aramaic, and Latin, or even who could speak only Aramaic and Latin. (If such people were present, Egeria does not mention them.) So, it is obvious from Egeria's account that Greek was doing the heavy lifting of cross-cultural exchange in late Roman Jerusalem. However, it must be emphasized from the start that eastern Christian languages like Aramaic/Syriac were ever-present and, at this time, were clearly more prominent than Latin.¹³ As Egeria highlights,

otherwise, in the sixth and early seventh centuries, see Feissel 2010. See also Millar 2009a, 93: 'It is also relevant that all the classic works of Roman Law, as passed down to posterity, were written in Latin, but were composed or compiled by Greek-speakers in Constantinople.' See also Averil Cameron 2009; Maas 2003; and on Willibald, see now Aist 2009.

¹³ Nevertheless, Latin was clearly in regular use among Christians in Jerusalem in the late fourth century. One would presume from Egeria's account that this is for pilgrims only (the *graecolatini* and their friends), but given Jerome's permanent move to Bethlehem just two years later in 386 with Paula and her daughter Eustochium, it would seem substantiated that a cohort of settled Latin émigrés had already started to form (Cain 2010; 2013). Furthermore, a few basic historical observations about cities in the eastern Roman empire could be brought to bear on this question: 1) nearby Caesarea Maritima was a Roman *colonia* (from the time of Vespasian) with special privileges, in addition to being an important provincial capital and port; 2) Jerusalem (Aelia Capitolina after Hadrian) was also a Roman *colonia* 3) likewise, nearby Berytus (Beirut) was a Roman *colonia* (since the time of Augustus) and served, in addition, as the primary eastern center of Roman legal education (in Latin and Greek) until the sixth century (Hall 2004; and more below); and 4) public Latin inscriptions continued as late as the 340s in the ancient and revered city of Heliopolis (Baalbek), also a *colonia* (at least from the time of Septimius Severus). (On these points and others, see now Eck 2009, esp. 32–40 on Heliopolis and Caesarea, and Isaac 2009.) Yet, it is clear from the literary evidence and the history of the Church in this period that Latin was not a language of great significance among eastern Christians: indeed, it was never a stable marker of any defined Christian community in the late antique East (Millar 1998, 160; though compare Eck 2009, 39). The paradoxical absence of Latin as a cultural marker is thus worth noting in light of the region's deep Roman roots by this point. Instead, as with Roman government, it was Greek that served as the lingua franca for communication among different strands of Christians, and this situation continued through the period of the Ecumenical Councils (Millar 2006b; 2008b; 2009). But the success of other Christian languages later, such as Georgian in the Jerusalem monasteries of the ninth to eleventh centuries (Janin 1913), should give us pause: Greek's dominance over Latin in the fourth and fifth centuries is neither a permanent situation nor does it tell the whole story of the role of Greek. In fact, the discovery of the only surviving text in Caucasian Albanian among the New Finds at Sinai – a lectionary reused in a palimpsest – provides an argument that the linguistic situation among eastern Christians was both more complex and is today more imperfectly known than commonly assumed: on the significance of this discovery, see Renoux 2012.

Greek was the primary language for the liturgical reading of Scripture, and, as we will see, the liturgical value of Greek only grows more prominent in later centuries.¹⁴

Among indigenous Jerusalem Christians, and eastern Christians broadly, Greek-Aramaic interaction continued throughout Late Antiquity and was one of the most important cultural moments in the history of middle-eastern civilization, particularly when the 'Abbāsid Caliphate made use of this connection at Baghdad.¹⁵ But this was not the first great moment of Greco-Semitic cultural efflorescence. From the time of Alexander the Great's eastern conquests in the fourth century BCE, the Jewish communities of the eastern Mediterranean had embraced the universal language of Greek as their own medium of communication. The translation of the Hebrew Bible into Greek took place over many centuries, by numerous hands, and in different locales, and the resulting Septuagint – along with the Alexandrian lore that accompanied it – became one of the most culturally influential confluences of the Indo-European and Semitic language families ever.¹⁶ The Septuagint was the dominant Bible among early Christians and usually the only one educated Mediterranean Christians could read in the early centuries, unless they were direct converts from a sect of Judean Judaism. It can be agreed, therefore, that Greek was a fundamental 'given' of eastern Christianity, whether or not one spoke it. It

¹⁴ On this subject, see now Galadza 2013, which deals primarily with the latest period of the present study but which offers the clearest explanation of the role of Greek in eastern liturgy outside of Constantinople. See also the recent study of the Jerusalem lectionary by Verhelst 2012. One might compare to this situation the reading of Aramaic Targums at synagogues throughout the Middle East in Late Antiquity: Rabbinic law required the Hebrew to be read alongside, since that was the original and authoritative language of Scripture. However, it is unclear whether this injunction was followed to the letter and, regardless, one presumes that Aramaic was the mother tongue of these communities: see Alexander 1992.

¹⁵ The translation movement among Syriac Christians, in the service of the 'Abbāsids, is not a part of this study, mainly since that subject has already received several dedicated treatments. Nevertheless, the Greek language was a major part of these translators' education (whether at Nisibis, Qenneshre, Jundīsābūr, or elsewhere), and their translations covered both sacred and secular literature in equal measure (Brock 1983). The translation movement of Greek to Arabic at 'Abbāsid Baghdad, which was largely the work of Syriac Christians (Syriac-Greek-Arabic trilingual translators), is justly famous and had a deep impact on the Islamic world (Gutas 1998; Brock 1991; Tannous 2010; 2013): of the 61 translators known by name, 58 of them were East Syrian Christians (see Takahashi 2011). It is worth noting, moreover, that the Syriac translators of the seventh century were working in several different centers throughout the eastern Mediterranean, and were also traveling and talking to one another as they prepared their translations.

¹⁶ See Rajak 2009; Wasserstein and Wasserstein 2006; Niehoff 2011; and Fernández Marcos 2009.

is entirely another matter, however, what conclusions should be drawn from the statement that Greek was a given.

III. GREEK, SYRIAC, AND THE LANGUAGE OF ROMAN POWER

In 1998 Fergus Millar, in the first of many articles on language use in the East, argued that the rise of Christian Aramaic literature (Syriac and CPA) took place ‘within the framework of a predominantly Greek church, and was not (or was not yet) a challenge to it’.¹⁷ At a basic level this statement is incontrovertible: there was a persistent interaction between Greek and Syriac, very early on, and going much later than Millar investigates. But the troubling part of that statement for many Syriacists has been that Millar’s chosen language of ‘Greek Church’ and ‘challenge’ suggests a competitive angle, as if there could be only one dominant language, and that language was Greek. This approach can already be seen adumbrated in the latter sections of Millar’s classic book *The Roman Near East, 31 BC-AD 337*, in which he is particularly skeptical about reconstructing early Syriac Christianity, and reviewers were quick to note what they perceived as an overly dismissive treatment of Syriac.¹⁸ Despite criticism, however, Millar has maintained, even intensified, this argument in numerous subsequent articles and especially in the book coming from his Sather Classical Lectures, *A Greek Roman Empire: Power and Belief under Theodosius II, 408-450* (2006b).¹⁹ In seeking to explain how the Roman empire maintained authority in the East during this period, Millar has consistently deemphasized the public role of Syriac and highlighted Syriac speakers’ use of Greek. His main sources for this argument are Greek and Syriac inscriptions as well as book history in the period (including some limited papyrological finds). He also makes extensive use of the extant conciliar Acta from the fifth century, treating them as a documentary source for language use.

¹⁷ Millar 1998, 165. Compare the statement by Robert Murray: ‘The isolation early Syriac Christianity feels from the Greek-speaking world, considering how largely the two worlds overlapped and how local cultures in almost the whole Near and Middle East reveal hellenistic features, is amazing’ (Murray 1982, 6).

¹⁸ Millar 1993, 241–242, 457–467, 472–481, 485–488. For reviews with contextualizations, see H.J.W. Drijvers 1996, Shahid 1995, and Shaw 1995, esp. 291: ‘It is therefore rather misleading to speak of Greek as “predominant” when, taken in the larger context, it seems to have had a special formal role to play that was closely tied to the central political powers in the region.’

¹⁹ Significant reviews by Fowden 2007, Gillett 2008, and Mayer 2007, esp. 614, ‘His thesis about the Greekness of the eastern empire in the domain of public communication at all levels of church and state obscures some important facts.’

In *A Greek Roman Empire*, Millar points out, programmatically, that Syriac inscriptions (without bilingual translation into Greek) do not appear west of the Euphrates (i.e., in the heartland of the Greek Roman empire) until the fifth century and, likewise, dated Syriac manuscripts appear west of the Euphrates (according to the surviving evidence) only from the sixth century on.²⁰ In other words, for Millar, datable documentary sources suggest the conclusion that Syriac was not a major language in the Roman diocese of Oriens until the sixth century at the earliest and, therefore, cannot be understood as having the same cultural and linguistic significance as Greek in the formation of eastern Late Antiquity, particularly from an imperial point of view.

Millar goes on to claim that, on the basis of the evidence of the Ecumenical Councils, Greek was the dominant Christian language everywhere in the Roman East: in the nine provinces of Oriens that lie west of the Euphrates (i.e., the two Syrias, two Phoenicias, Euphratensis, Arabia, and the three Palestines), ‘there is not a single example of a bishop who speaks or subscribes [in the *Acta*] in any language other than Greek’.²¹ There are only two scenes in the fifth-century *Acta* where translation into or out of Syriac takes place in the process of the Councils. First, when bishop Ouranios of Himeria, at a session in Berytus in early 449, preliminary to the ‘Robber Council’ at Ephesus, required translation of Greek into Syriac.²² And second, the archimandrite Barsauma of Samosata (d. c.458), a supporter of Dioscorus of Alexandria and Eutyches, who had previously been invited to Ephesus in 449 by Theodosius II himself, spoke in Syriac on the floor of the Council (the only time, apparently, that this occurred at Chalcedon).²³ Millar notes that, for comparison, even the contemporary bishop of Edessa, Nonnos, spoke in Greek on the floor of Chalcedon.²⁴ He concludes this line of inquiry by claiming that, ‘even in Osrhoene, Greek remained the predominant language used within the Church in formal public contexts’.²⁵

This mode of argumentation should begin raising some alarm bells. The fact that most bilingual Syriac-Greek speakers decided to speak in Greek at Ecumenical

²⁰ Millar 2006b, 108. While this is true (see further below at n. 108), it conveniently minimizes the value of the multitude of Syriac inscriptions from the year 6 CE on, just east of the Euphrates: see Drijvers and Healey 1999 and Brock 2009, along with *GEDSH* s.v. ‘Old Syriac documents’ and ‘Inscriptions’; and, more generally on early Syriac script, Healey 2000. One could counter that the notional value of the Euphrates – hardly a barrier to cultural or religious exchange – with regard to language use is trivial.

²¹ Millar 2006b, 110.

²² Millar 2006b, 112. This session was quoted in full in the *Acta* of session XI at Chalcedon (Millar 2006b, 257).

²³ See Fiey 2004, 49–50.

²⁴ Millar 2006b, 113.

²⁵ Millar 2006b, 113.

Councils is really not surprising given that they were imperially sponsored events and, as a consequence, were usually sited near to (or in) Constantinople – that is, a region which never boasted indigenous Syriac speakers. Moreover, from the easterners' point of view, why would they not want their ideas to receive an imperial audience? It was inevitable that Greek would dominate these Councils – especially Chalcedon, very near the capital – and it should not surprise us that native Syriac speakers from the provinces of Osroene and Mesopotamia were underrepresented and were often, moreover, the political losers in these debates. Barsauma, speaking in his native Syriac on the floor of Chalcedon, doubtless appeared to the urban elite like an uncouth savage and unworthy of serious attention, despite Theodosius' personal invitation in 449.

More to the point, it might be noted that the *Acta* are, by their literary nature, rhetorical. Whatever we have of Ephesus in 431 and Ephesus in 449 comes from having been collected at Chalcedon as part of the minutes, mostly for the purpose of *condemning* (or, at best, re-contextualizing) ideas expressed at those Councils.²⁶ The *Acta*, even where accurately representing dissenting views, are a pasteurized or streamlined version and only very rarely produce any real-world evidence of multilingualism. For instance, as Millar admits, eighteen of the sixty-five bishops at the Berytus session (where Ouranios required Syriac translation) signed a Greek petition in support of Ibas of Edessa in 449 in Syriac. We only know this fact, however, because the text as collected in the *Acta* for Chalcedon remarks on their Syriac subscription (*hypographē Suriakē*), while providing their actual signatures, of course, only in Greek.²⁷ In other words, a natural linguistic critique of this kind of evidence – which is, to my mind, a literary and not a documentary source – would be to try to ascertain the degree to which a predilection for Greek, or a Greek mode of writing, was built into the genre of conciliar *Acta* from their very conception.

In his most recent work on this subject, Millar has expanded his remit to Greek and Syriac literary history. He has written two articles that collectively cover the first five centuries CE, focusing specifically on patterns of language use in Edessa and Oshroene.²⁸ In the first article (2011), Millar focuses on the earliest period of Greco-Syriac interaction, in the second and third centuries CE. He addresses first the important Syriac and Greek papyri discovered in and around Dura Europos

²⁶ See Price and Gaddis 2005, 1.75–85. See also the articles in Price and Whitby 2009.

²⁷ Millar 2006b, 112–113.

²⁸ Millar 2011; 2012. See also his new article on Syriac scribal activity in the sixth century west of the Euphrates: Millar 2013a; and for background on this topic the standard article of Mundell Mango 1991. NB: Millar 2013a and 2013b appeared as the present study was being finalized for publication. I address 2013b, which is both a summation and manifesto of Millar's most recent position, in the conclusion to this study.

that were written in Edessa from 240 to 250.²⁹ One of these papyri (dating to 243) concerns the sale of a female slave and is written in Syriac.³⁰ Among the several witnesses to the sale who sign in Syriac, one ‘Aurelios Mannos’ signs in Greek. On the verso, one ‘Aurelios Abgar’, described in Syriac as a *stratega* (*strategos* = *duumvir*),³¹ writes his subscription in Syriac, then signs his name in Greek as ‘Abgaros’. To Millar this evidence merely depicts a certain low-level (and therefore insignificant) bilingualism at Edessa. This sort of bilingualism is not confirmed, for him, elsewhere in the written record. In fact, he notes that the later documents in the cache – only seven to eight years later, in 249 and 250 – are mainly in Greek with only their signatures in Syriac. Millar claims this trend, even given the short distance in time between the documents, is evidence of the inevitable decline of Syriac for formal documents, in the face of a growing Roman presence, *in Greek*, in Osrhoene.³² Osrhoene was incorporated into the Roman provincial system in 195 under Septimius Severus, and Edessa became a *colonia* in 213 under Caracalla. For Millar, one dominant element of Romanization was concomitant Hellenization, and as a consequence of this Romanization, whatever pre-existent (or contemporary) Greco-Syriac bilingualism there may have been in the early period appears very superficial in the record and did not leave lasting effects in the culture or literature of the region.

To buttress these claims Millar goes further in the 2011 article to argue that no major Syriac literature, except the *Book of the Laws of the Countries*, a work associated with the philosopher Bardaisan around 200 CE, can be located with certainty at Edessa before the arrival of Ephrem there in 363.³³ This notional ban includes the Peshitta Old Testament, the *Diatessaron* Gospels (attributed to Tatian), the *Odes of Solomon*, the *Acts of Thomas*, and several other works, all of which have traditionally

²⁹ These papyri have been analyzed by Brock 1994 (and had been discussed briefly by Millar 1993, 478–481).

³⁰ Drijvers and Healey 1999, Appendix P1.

³¹ See Millar 2011, 99–104; and Millar 2006a. As Millar notes, this is not the normal ‘STRTG’ – the initial aleph has been removed (Millar 2011, 102).

³² Millar 2011, 103.

³³ Both Healey 2007 and Brock 1992a, surprisingly, make similar reductive claims to Millar’s about bilingual writing at Edessa c.200: e.g., Healey 2007, 124: ‘Though Bardaisan may form a prominent peak of Hellenism, it is not clear that he is the tip of an iceberg of any great significance.’ For both Healey and Brock, the *Book of the Laws of the Countries* is the only early work that was both definitively produced at Edessa and also somewhat Hellenized in content. However, their reasoning is different from Millar’s. Whereas for Healey and Brock the specter of rampant bilingualism would dilute their arguments for an autochthonous ‘semitic’ quality among early Syriac writers at Edessa (third to fourth centuries), for Millar, Greco-Syriac bilingualism is a natural precipitate of Roman power and thus should not be applied to Edessa until after its Romanization-Hellenization (mid-third century). The analysis below rejects both of these models.

been situated in a bilingual Edessene context in the late second and early third centuries. The Syriac dialect of Aramaic was called by native Syriac authors *leshana urhaya* ‘the language of Edessa (*Urhai*)’, and it was often assumed by these authors that literature written in this Aramaic dialect, especially in the early period, was naturally to be associated with Edessa.³⁴ However, Millar boldly claims that, because we cannot document exactly where this literature was produced, there is no good reason to prefer Edessa to somewhere else, preferably somewhere further east, in Persia. He says, without further qualification, that ‘the conception of Edessa as having been from an early stage the main center of Syriac literary culture is possibly misplaced’,³⁵ and, ‘early Syriac texts should not be attributed to Edessa unless there is a specific reason’.³⁶

The goal of such an assertion, in line with his arguments about the documentary papyri, is to create space for the conclusion that the evidence of Greco-Syriac interaction in the early period, at both the low and high registers, is very limited. The works he refuses to consider as part of Edessene literary culture around 200 all show clear signs of Greco-Roman influence and some were possibly produced originally (or simultaneously) in Greek. While allowing for a certain low-level predominance of Syriac in Osrhoene in the early third century, evidenced by the famous Edessene mosaics (more below), he is convinced that, following Edessa’s acquisition of *colonia* status in 213, Greek takes over as a dominant language.³⁷ In other words, for Millar there could be only one language of cultural dominance in a given region in the East, and when under Roman control that language was Greek.

Millar’s claims are obviously trenchant and pointed, for both the third to fourth centuries and even later into the fifth and sixth (Millar 2012; 2013a; 2013b). He clearly has in mind the diminution of the Syriac language throughout this whole period in histories of the late Roman Near East. Specifically, in *A Greek Roman Empire* Millar calls his conclusions about the fifth-century Acta ‘a check on the role and status which Syriac had acquired in the public life of the Greek Church by the middle of the [fifth] century’.³⁸ His language here is at least as combative as in his

³⁴ This is made explicit by later Syriac grammatical writers, such as Jacob of Edessa and Barhebraeus.

³⁵ Millar 2011, 94.

³⁶ Millar 2011, 110.

³⁷ See Millar 2011, 93 n.2.

³⁸ Millar 2006b, 114. The following more recent statement can be taken as a summary of his position generally: ‘What is certain, however, is, first, that in the wider Greek world, from Egypt to Thrace, all ecclesiastical communications, written or spoken, will have been in Greek; that all Christian thought and theology derived from a mass of patristic writing in Greek; and that “orthodox” [i.e., Syrian Orthodox] thought, even that coming from the areas where Syriac was spoken, was still, in the later sixth century, being expressed in Greek as well as Syriac’ (Millar 2013b, 72).

original article on the subject (1998), and in his most recent articles (2011; 2012; 2013a; 2013b) he continues this agenda. Therefore, given such an extensive and aggressive case, made over many years and in numerous publications, it will not be special pleading to ask whether Millar's version is, taken as a whole, a legitimate interpretation of the historical evidence. Furthermore, it is appropriate to consider carefully whether Millar is posing the correct problems and, similarly, whether he is starting from assumptions about language and literature in the late antique world that may have directed or influenced his course.

My answer to these questions begins with the acknowledgment that Millar has shown more clearly than anyone just how prominent Greek was as a lingua franca in the late antique Near East. As I noted above, Greek was a cultural given at a level that Latin never achieved in the East: this was due originally to the conquests of Alexander the Great and the impact of his successors, but also, as Millar shows, to the use that the Romans made of Greek in ruling the eastern empire from Constantinople, Antioch, Caesarea Maritima, and other eastern capitals. Millar is pursuing a topic that is fundamental to the late ancient world and he has already mined a wealth of evidence from sources (namely, conciliar Acta and inscriptions) that have, to date, gone underutilized for this type of study.

However, to serve these conclusions, Millar has intentionally disenfranchised a wealth of literature in Syriac from the third and fourth centuries which speaks eloquently of the rise of its own intellectual and religious culture in the midst of a Greek milieu. An important principle in tracing Greek multilingualism throughout Late Antiquity is that what speakers of other languages (Syriac, Coptic, etc.) do with (or to) Greek *in their own language* is just as important as what is actually being written in Greek. In other words, Greek in eastern Christianity has a cultural history of its own; it has a social presence apart from Greek works themselves. To ignore the evidence for that presence in other languages is to do a disservice to the history of the period. This is one reason it is such a shame that Millar has eschewed the literary history of Syriac at Edessa in the second to fourth centuries. There is much that this literature can tell us about the value of Greek (its 'given' status), from the beginning of Late Antiquity right through to Middle Byzantium. In other words, Millar's own apparent goal, to show the prominence of Greek as a lingua franca in the eastern Roman empire, can be much more fully achieved (in richness of evidence and depth of insight) if the Hellenism of Syriac (and other eastern Christian) literature is allowed to speak in its own cultural voice and context.

To achieve this richer picture, one must also be willing to accept the idea that the Roman empire may not have been the prime mover in the process of Hellenization. The preachers of the Christian *kerygma* and their supporting communities and institutions had adopted Greek as a medium of communication in the East a century or so before the Roman empire did. Greek was a foremost marker of Christianity in the East, not just as an ethnic badge or a *Rechtssprache* but as the foundational language of a burgeoning religion. I will explain this claim in more detail below.

For the moment, before leaving this methodological discussion, it will be worthwhile to conclude with a mosaic from the Edessene Syriac context that can bring to life these issues of interpretation and first principles. This is a mosaic depicting Orpheus taming the wild animals, formerly in the Dallas Museum of Art, now returned to Turkey, which was first made known to the public only in 1999 through an antiquities sale at Christie's New York.³⁹

Following its discovery and sale it received two dedicated studies by experts in early Syriac, John Healey and Ute Possekel.⁴⁰ The mosaic is important for the high quality of its preservation as well as for its inscriptions, which include the only signature in Syriac by a mosaicist, a man named 'Barsaged' (lit. 'son of worship').⁴¹ This mosaic joins a group of about twenty-five inscribed, published mosaics from Edessa and nearby, several of which contain dates placing their installation between 214 and 248 CE.⁴² This mosaic, however, offers a specific date of April 194 CE, which makes it the earliest dated Syriac mosaic known.⁴³

The image of Orpheus taming the animals was present throughout the Roman empire, from a villa in Pompeii (the Casa d'Orfeo) to the famous synagogue in Dura Europos.⁴⁴ There survive from the Roman Near East five roughly contemporary mosaics with either Greek or Syriac inscriptions depicting the same scene. One of the others was discovered by J.B. Segal in 1956 in a tomb at Edessa and it contained a Syriac inscription: this mosaic is unfortunately now lost.⁴⁵ The Orpheus motif has at times been identified as an image of paradisiacal Judeo-Christian thought about the coming of the kingdom of God (e.g., Isaiah 65:25, etc.),⁴⁶ but there is no clear indication that these mosaics arise from an explicitly Jewish or Christian context. The image might be read as generally suitable to a funerary setting if signaling a vision of the afterlife, and other Orpheus mosaics from around the Roman empire have been found in tombs.⁴⁷

³⁹ Becker and Rand 1999.

⁴⁰ Healey 2006 (*editio princeps*); Possekel 2008.

⁴¹ It was common for sculptors to sign their work (e.g., Drijvers and Healey 1999, A55) but not mosaicists. The bold location of the signature – by the head of Orpheus – has drawn comment: Healey 2006, 325. In fact, the Syriac word for 'mosaicist' (*rāṣoufā* = *pavimentarius*), which is how Barsaged describes himself, was not previously attested.

⁴² See Healey 2006, 313–314 for the details and bibliography. See also, more generally, Balty 1995 and Balty and Briquel Chatonnet 2000 (neither of which includes the 'Dallas Orpheus' mosaic because it had not yet come to light).

⁴³ The 'Tripod Mosaic' from Edessa could possibly be dated to as early as 128 CE: for discussion, see Possekel 2008, 8–9.

⁴⁴ Jesnick 1997.

⁴⁵ Segal 1959.

⁴⁶ Possekel 2008, 2 n.4; 25–28.

⁴⁷ Healey 2006, 316; Possekel 2008, 13.

The more basic point – which certainly does not preclude religious significance – is that the incorporation of Greek mythological imagery into a Syriac linguistic context can now be firmly dated twenty years earlier, and thus prior both to Osrhoene's incorporation as a Roman province in 195 and to Edessa's accession to *colonia* status in 213. While Millar has noted the existence of such mosaics, and studied them alongside narrative synagogue mosaics from Late Antiquity, he does not appropriate them as evidence in the current debate.⁴⁸ In fact, he appears surprised that the (in his words) 'traumatic' experience of Edessa becoming a Roman colony, with the requisite imposition of Greek, does not register itself in these Syriac funerary mosaics from a linguistic point of view, pointing to the Dura papyri as *comparanda*.⁴⁹

By contrast, however, one could easily emphasize that the 'Dallas Orpheus' signifies an earlier engagement between Hellenic imagery and the Syriac language in Edessene public life than Millar has allowed for. Ute Possekel, speaking about this Orpheus mosaic, has described that interplay in the following way: 'The Osrhoenian elite clearly did not produce mosaics merely in reaction to political dominion by Rome, but freely adopted elements of Greco-Roman culture and art before and alongside the establishment of closer political ties'.⁵⁰ Millar's insistence on a swift and decisive incursion of Greek into the life of Syriac speakers in the early to mid-third century isolates any earlier trends toward Hellenization in Edessa. He either downplays the significance of mosaics with Greek imagery or, like some others, claims that they were produced in the context of a newly minted Roman *colonia* and are thus to be expected.

Concerning the long literary history presented below, it is not as if Millar is unaware of this literature (2011; 2012; 2013a; 2013b). The difference between our approaches is that he wants to see Hellenization as the direct consequence of Romanization and, as an extension, where there was Greco-Syriac interaction, he wants to claim Greek was the dominant language. His interpretation of the period based on *Acta* from Chalcedon skews the argument in that direction because of the rhetorical nature of his evidence. From my perspective, this is a very narrow mode by which to investigate a vibrant period of cultural and linguistic change.

⁴⁸ Millar 2008a, esp. 235: '... and nothing could demonstrate more vividly the emergence of Syriac culture as an off-shoot and adaptation of Greek culture, pagan and then Christian'.

⁴⁹ Millar 2011, 98. So many new mosaics are coming to light in this region that it would be presumptuous to make large claims about language use on the basis of the surviving material. The two most recently discovered from the region ('Dallas Orpheus' and 'Prometheus') show a much more thorough Hellenization of Syriac-speaking areas, and (in the case of the 'Dallas Orpheus') a quarter-century earlier, than was previously known. For survey of what has come to light recently (absent 'Dallas Orpheus'), see Balty and Briquel Chatonnet 2000.

⁵⁰ Possekel 2008, 29.

The glimpse above from Egeria's famous account of the Jerusalem Holy Week liturgy in 384 suggests that languages could coexist and that late antique multilingual environments were complex systems. Yes, Greek could be the dominant language at the liturgy – the language in which the Scriptures *must* be read out, as Egeria claims – but Egeria also notes simultaneous public translation into 'Syrian', and even the bishop's personal knowledge of the language. Also fascinating, even as an aside, are the little circles of *graecolatini* whispering *ad hoc* Latin translations of the liturgy to one another as the service progresses.

Furthermore, as I will show below, the incredibly rapid pace of translations from Greek into Syriac around 500 – for the works of Severus of Antioch above all – suggests a community of bilingual scribes eager to find the most current and impactful theological texts to translate into Syriac. For hagiography, the contemporary *Life of Peter the Iberian* in Syriac suggests a similar situation, as do the new Syriac fragments of Cyril of Scythopolis found at Sinai. Moreover, the Greek version of the *Life of St Sabas* by Cyril of Scythopolis highlights the fact that Armenian monks were encouraged by Sabas himself to pray the psalter in their own dedicated worship space and then to come together with the whole community (Greek and Aramaic) for the Eucharist.⁵¹ Likewise, in his *Life of St Theodosius*, Theodore of Petra notes that in his day the mass at the monastery of St Theodosius was chanted daily in three languages: Greek, Armenian, and the 'the language of the Bessoi' (probably here meaning Georgian, not Thracian).⁵² On the basis of this evidence I would like to see the earlier material that Millar has disenfranchised as of a piece with the broader trend of interaction between Greek and indigenous eastern Christian languages in the late Roman empire. This multilingual reality thus extended from the second century through the ninth century, and even beyond. To me, the question of the approved imperial language, the language of power (the *Reichssprache*) or the language of law (the *Rechtssprache*), be it Latin, Greek, or Arabic, is a red herring.⁵³

⁵¹ *Life of Sabas* 20 and 32, ed. Schwartz 1939, 105.3–17 and 117.1–118.20; trans. Price 1991, 114 and 126–127. The miaphysite commitment of these Armenians is made clear by the second of these passages. On the attempts at reunion between the Armenians and Constantinople in the sixth century, see Galadza 2013, 48, along with Garsoian 2005–2007.

⁵² Blake 1965, 369; *Life of St Theodosius* 45.5–18, ed. Usener 1890. My argument that 'Bessian' here means Georgian comes from the fact that, in the same period, the Piacenza Pilgrim (570) mentions that the monks on Sinai spoke Greek, Latin, Syriac, Coptic, and 'Bessian' (37, ed. Geyer and Cuntz 1965, 148; Stewart 1887, 29, has mistranslated this as 'Persian'). From the known history of St Catherine's in this period (see below), the only language missing from the Piacenza Pilgrim's list is Georgian, whereas no trace of ethnically/linguistically Thracian monks can be applied to the sixth century. On this topic, see further in Galadza 2013, 48–49 n.33. Note also the Georgian version of the *Life of Kyriakos* by Cyril of Scythopolis (Garitte 1962).

⁵³ Compare the use of this concept in Wasserstein 2003; Hoyland 2004; and Papaconstantinou 2007 and 2012.

The churches of the empire created cultural currents all their own, and language was less a political necessity and more a functional tool for intellectual interaction and the self-definition of community.

Beyond being a very popular topic in ancient and medieval studies today, multilingualism was clearly a building block of what we call ‘Late Antiquity’ in its original historical setting. Several recent publications have brought the subject of multilingualism into the foreground of academic writing: for instance, J.N. Adams’ magisterial studies of *Bilingualism and the Latin Language* (2003), *The Regional Diversification of Latin* (2007), *Social Variation and the Latin Language* (2013), and his valuable edited volume (with Mark Janse and Simon Swain) *Bilingualism in Ancient Society* (2002). One could also cite the following recent collected volumes: *From Hellenism to Islam: Cultural and Linguistic Change in the Roman Near East* (2009), edited by Hannah Cotton, Robert Hoyland, Jonathan Price, and David Wasserstein; *The Multilingual Experience in Egypt* (2010), edited by Arietta Papaconstantinou; and *Multilingualism in the Graeco-Roman Worlds* (2012), edited by Alex Mullen and Patrick James, along with Mullen’s own monograph on Mediterranean multilingualism in Southern Gaul (2013). This type of work, common among Egyptologists (e.g. Bagnall 2011), has not yet been applied in a systematic way to Greco-Syriac interaction; no major attempt has been made to apply to Greco-Syriac literature the lessons learned from the rich Greco-Coptic material (Papaconstantinou 2007). In looking toward the future of scholarship in this area, I hope that this provisional foray into multilingual literary history will at least highlight some of the exciting possibilities for research while also explaining the emergent fault lines in the scholarly discussion.

IV. THE EARLY PERIOD: EDESSA, THIRD TO FOURTH CENTURIES

The attitude toward Greek among eastern non-Greek-speaking Christians was certainly not broadly suspicious. On the contrary, Greek was prized both for what one was able to read in the language and as a marker of education, quite apart from doctrinal or denominational categories. That is not to say it was uniformly privileged, however, and the relative (authoritative or paradigmatic) weight that eastern Christians granted Greek is an inflection point in the literary history.

As has already been made clear in the discussion above, one of the best places to start in looking for this inflection point is the capital of Syriac-speaking Christianity in the Roman province of Osrhoene, Edessa. Although situated east of the Euphrates at the very north-eastern border of the Roman empire, Edessa was nevertheless one of the most vibrant centers of Greek learning among eastern Christians, from the beginning to the end of Late Antiquity. It was also self-consciously a touchstone for

both East and West during the period, a meeting point for various traditions.⁵⁴ Its leading authors were often bilingual, particularly at the beginning and at the end of Late Antiquity. And, further, Edessa served to inspire other centers of Greek-Syriac and Greek-Arabic interaction throughout Mesopotamia: the schools of Nisibis, Qenneshre, and Jundīsābūr being three prominent Syriac examples, and Baghdad being the canonical Arabic example. All four of these daughter centers became hubs for vibrant intellectual reception, translation, and educational movements in their own right. One might also mention Damascus as having a connection to Edessa, though this relationship appears less prominently in the surviving literature.

The bilingualism of Edessa explodes fully formed onto the pages of eastern Mediterranean literary history around 200 CE. Deriving from the local school of the philosopher Bardaisan (154–222 CE), the *Book of the Laws of the Countries* (surviving in Syriac) shows a breadth of acquaintance with Greek science, philosophy, and religious ideas, as well as those of Mesopotamia and further east.⁵⁵ Significant later Greek writers made use of the text, including the redactor of the Pseudo-Clementine *Recognitions* (c. 360), Eusebius of Caesarea, and Basil of Caesarea, among others.⁵⁶ Bardaisan was known to the Greek historian and miscellanist Julius Africanus, who says he exhibited his archery talent before the Roman emperor Septimius Severus during an imperial visit of 195 CE to the Edessene court of Abgar VIII (177–212 CE).⁵⁷

The *Book of the Laws of the Countries*, compiled from Bardaisan's lectures by his student Philip, may easily have been published simultaneously in Greek and Syriac, even though Han J.W. Drijvers demonstrated Syriac to be the primary language of composition.⁵⁸ The text survives today in a single Syriac manuscript of the sixth or seventh century (BL Add. 14.658), which is also the sole surviving manuscript of the *Apology to Marcus Aurelius* attributed to Melito of Sardis (c.170), the apologetic *Hypomnemata* of 'Ambrose' (attributed to Justin Martyr), and the *Letter of Mara*

⁵⁴ On the character of Edessa in this period, see Segal 1963; 1970; and H.J.W. Drijvers 1980.

⁵⁵ H.J.W. Drijvers 1966, 217: '[Bardaisan] is called a Parthian, an Armenian, a Mesopotamian, and a Syrian, and none of these appellations says anything regarding his origin. Parthian may refer to his position at the court of Edessa, Armenian to his relations with Armenia, reinforced by the dynastic ties to that country, while the last two designations indicate that his home was in Mesopotamia and Syria.'

⁵⁶ Murray 1982. Among others, the Syriac author John the Solitary (John of Apamea) also used the Greek dialogue form in the sixth century: Brock 1997, 32; Strothmann 1972; Hansbury 2013; on dialogue literature in Late Antiquity more generally, see now Averil Cameron 2014. On the Syrian context of the Pseudo-Clementine literature, see now Kelley 2006.

⁵⁷ Africanus *Kestoi* F12.20.35–47 (ed. Wallraff et al. 2012, 102–103). Bardaisan, in a kind of athletic *ekphrasis*, drew a portrait of 'a handsome and robust youth' from life with arrows (Adler 2009, 6–7). For a general study of Africanus and the Roman Near East, see Adler 2004 along with the articles in Wallraff 2006 and Wallraff and Mecella 2009.

⁵⁸ H.J.W. Drijvers 1966, 66.

Bar Serapion to His Son (c.200), all surviving only in Syriac though all presumably translated from Greek originals (except perhaps the *Letter of Mara*).⁵⁹ Bardaisan wrote other works known to late antique writers of which all but fragments are lost today: a work against the Marcionites (partially preserved in the fourth-century Greek *Life of Aberkios* = *BHG* 2); a book on Indian customs and traditions (known to Porphyry); a history of Armenia (as noted by the Armenian geographer Moses of Khoren); 150 hymns on religious subjects (known to Ephrem); and several others.⁶⁰ It has also been argued occasionally that Bardaisan was the author of the second-century *Odes of Solomon* and the ‘Hymn of the Pearl’ in the *Acts of Thomas* (see below).⁶¹ Whether Bardaisan himself knew Greek was debated in antiquity and still is today – a hostile witness writing in Greek, Epiphanius of Salamis, claims he knew both (*Panarion* 56.1.2), and Han Drijvers was inclined to accept this testimony.⁶² Regardless of Bardaisan’s own bilingualism, his works clearly circulated in both Greek and Syriac from a very early stage after composition.

The *Odes of Solomon*, a work traditionally ascribed to Edessa, were, according to their most recent editor, written originally in Greek toward the beginning of the second century CE.⁶³ The surviving poems are in Syriac and Coptic translation (with early fragments in Greek). Whether these translations were made in Syria/Mesopotamia, Egypt, or elsewhere is not a crucial issue for the present study. More important is the speed at which they were translated and disseminated in this early period: the Greek version was, at the least, in circulation by 200 CE, and the Coptic translation was made before the mid-third century, and if they were originally in Syriac (as was long thought), then they would be the earliest non-inscriptional Syriac text known. The popularity of the *Odes of Solomon* in Syriac and Coptic translation demonstrates not just the value of the poems themselves but the knowledge of and regard for Greek in these bilingual communities.

⁵⁹ For a description of this manuscript, see Wright 1870–1872, 3.1154–60; for editions and translations of all the texts mentioned here, see Cureton 1855. On the *Apology* attributed to Melito, see Van Rompay in *GEDSH*, s.v. ‘Meliton the Philosopher’; on the *Letter of Mara Bar Serapion*, see Schulthess 1897 and McVey 1990, who suggest a third- and fourth-century dating for the letter, respectively.

⁶⁰ See J.W. Drijvers 2006. The diverse catalogue of genres in his oeuvre is characteristic also of Africanus: see Adler 2009, 1.

⁶¹ For an edition and translation of the surviving Syriac *Odes of Solomon*, see Charlesworth 1978; see also now Charlesworth 1998. Poems from the *Odes* also survive in Greek and Coptic: see generally Murray 1982.

⁶² H.J.W. Drijvers 1966, 68; however, Drijvers (*ibid.*) is quick to point out that Epiphanius knew Syriac. It is equally possible, of course, that he read it in Greek, which seems to be the language in which Bardaisan was consulted by Eusebius and Basil of Caesarea (H.J.W. Drijvers 1966, 60–76).

⁶³ Lattke 1999; 2011. On the question of dating, see Lattke 2009, 6–10.

Tatian (c.120–173 CE) remains today one of the most enigmatic authors of early eastern Christianity.⁶⁴ Hailing from ‘Assyria’,⁶⁵ he traveled to Rome and was converted to Christianity by Justin Martyr. Around 170 he went back to the East and compiled the *Diatessaron*, a very influential harmony of the four Gospels which became the standard Gospel text in Syriac churches and which was translated into numerous Christian languages.⁶⁶ The *Diatessaron* (τὸ διὰ τεσσάρων εὐαγγέλιον = ‘the [one] Gospel through four [texts/authors]’) was probably written either in his native Syriac (Parker et al. 1999), or in Greek (Kraeling 1935), or even Latin (Burkitt 1904),⁶⁷ but, no matter the original language, the work survives foremost through a (fragmentary) Syriac commentary on it written by Ephrem the Syrian in the fourth century, a commentary which seems to have been known to the Greek liturgical poet Romanos the Melode in sixth-century Constantinople.⁶⁸ The *Diatessaron*’s relationship to other biblical texts in the early Christian world is a contested issue: it has been argued, for instance, that Tatian, even if composing in Greek, made use of the Syriac Peshitta Old Testament, prepared (in part, at least) by Jewish translators.⁶⁹

Along with inscriptions and the Peshitta Old Testament, the *Diatessaron* is one of the earliest Syriac texts known and, as such, has been seen by scholars as formative of Syriac Christianity at Edessa.⁷⁰ The *Diatessaron* was closely associated with Edessa for two centuries but was forcibly removed from some Syriac churches by Rabbula of Edessa (fl. c.412–435) and Theodoret of Cyrrhus (c.393–460), presumably due to its association with Tatian’s heresy and the well-established authority of the four separate Gospels (in the Old Syriac and especially in the prevailing Peshitta

⁶⁴ See Hunt 2003.

⁶⁵ *Oratio ad Graecos* 42.10–11, ed. Whittaker; i.e., perhaps, Edessa (Harnack 1893, 1.289) or Adiabene (Vööbus 1958, 1.38–39).

⁶⁶ In addition to 1) the Ephremic commentary in Armenian (Leloir 1953–1954) and Syriac (Leloir 1963; Leloir and Valdivieso 1990; McCarthy 1993), there survive 2) five Arabic manuscripts of a Gospel harmonization (Ciasca 1888; Marmardji 1935; Hill 1894); 3) one Persian manuscript (Messina 1951); 4) the Latin harmonization from the Codex Fuldensis, c.541–546 (Ranke 1868); 5) medieval harmonies, esp. a medieval Dutch version, the *Liège Diatessaron* (Plooij et al. 1929–1970); and 6) fourteen lines of a Greek fragment (*ante* 256/7) uncovered in Dura-Europos (Kraeling 1935; text = Frag. Münster 0212). The Greek fragment may suggest a Greek original, but some scholars have even questioned its Diatessaronic identification (Parker et al. 1999).

⁶⁷ See, generally, Petersen 1986 and 1994, who sides with Syriac as the original language.

⁶⁸ McCarthy 1993; Petersen 1985. Doubts have recently been raised regarding the *Commentary*’s authorship: see Lange 2005.

⁶⁹ Joosten 2001; cf. Shedinger 2001. More secure, perhaps, is the influence of the *Diatessaron* on the Old Syriac and Peshitta texts of the New Testament: Joosten 1996, 5–22. On the Syriac Old Testament generally, see Weitzmann 1999.

⁷⁰ H.J.W. Drijvers 1984, §1.

version).⁷¹ Regardless of its sources and original language(s), the *Diatessaron* was probably the earliest part of the New Testament to get from Greek into Syriac and it became the standard Gospel text in Syriac churches up to the middle of the fifth century.

Important for any discussion of the *Diatessaron*'s language, the only other surviving work by Tatian is the extant Greek *Oratio ad Graecos*, an apologetic diatribe against Greek philosophy and religion.⁷² Its main goals are to distance the author from Greek philosophical teaching and to demonstrate how the 'barbarian' teachings of Christianity bring salvation from the 'slavery' and 'tyrannies' of the secular world.⁷³ The heretical views later ascribed to Tatian are targeted at the period after his return to the East when he is supposed to have founded the Encratite movement – from ἐγκρατεία, 'self-control' – that was committed (in varying degrees) to sexual abstinence and vegetarianism.⁷⁴ Jerome claims that Tatian asserted the flesh of Christ was imaginary,⁷⁵ rejected marriage and eating meat,⁷⁶ and rejected some of Paul's epistles as inauthentic.⁷⁷ According to Irenaeus, Tatian seceded from the Church, had a Valentinian-Gnostic cosmology, denounced marriage as 'defilement' (φθορά) and 'fornication/prostitution' (πορνεία), and denied the salvation of Adam.⁷⁸ Clement of Alexandria and Origen accuse Tatian of a radical dualism.⁷⁹ So-called 'gnostic' elements of the *Diatessaron* and the *Oratio* have

⁷¹ For the text of Rabbula's proscription, see Vööbus 1960, 47; Theodoret's proscription: *Compendium of Heretical Fables* 20, PG 83.369–372 (trans. Pásztori-Kupán 2006, 202–203). The Syriac name for the four canonical gospels, the 'separated gospel' *Ewangelion da-mparrše*, shows the effect of the *Diatessaron* (the 'mixed gospel', *Ewangelion da-mhalte*) on the self-definition of other biblical instantiations.

⁷² Ed. and trans. Whittaker 1982; ed. also Marcovich 1995.

⁷³ See Vööbus 1958, 1.31–39; Whittaker 1982, xv–xvii; cf. Grant 1954. See also now Karadimas 2003 and Hunt 2003.

⁷⁴ Epiphanius *Panarion* 2.215, 219, etc., ed. Holl; Eusebius *Ecclesiastical History* 4.29.1, ed. Bardy; for a summary of potentially encratic elements in the *Diatessaron*, see Metzger 1977, 33–36; see also Barnard 1968. For a view that all of these criticisms of Tatian's ethics and Christology are merely later attempts at defamation and have no basis in fact, see Koltun-Fromm 2008.

⁷⁵ *Commentary on Galatians* 6; cf. Tatian *Oratio* 21. The *Diatessaron* does appear to promote an encratic ethic at points: see Brock 1970 on John the Baptist's diet which is changed in the *Diatessaron* from 'locusts and wild honey' to 'milk and wild honey' or 'honey and milk of the mountain'.

⁷⁶ *Against Jovinian* 1.3.

⁷⁷ Preface to the *Commentary on Titus*.

⁷⁸ *Against the Heresies* 1.26, ed. Harvey; also Hippolytus *Refutations* 8.16, 10.18, ed. Marcovich.

⁷⁹ Clement: *Stromateis*. 3.12.81ff., ed. Früchtel et al., but cf. 1.1. Origen: *On Prayer* 24.5, ed. Koetschau; cf. *Against Celsus* 1.16, ed. Borret.

been seen by some modern scholars as derived from the (probably Syrian) *Gospel of Thomas* (surviving whole in Coptic) or from a common source, the lost ‘Gospel of the Hebrews’.⁸⁰ Whatever the specific eccentricities of the *Oratio ad Graecos*, the genre of the Christian apology proliferated in the second and third centuries, not least in Rome, and it is worth connecting Tatian to this broader literary trend (including Syrian compatriots Melito of Sardis and Bardaisan). This genre, in turn, sets the Edessene intellectual world – described as a veritable eastern Sophistic in two recent articles on Julius Africanus (Adler 2004; 2009) – even more firmly within a Greek, Mediterranean background.

Finally, from Edessa (or broader Syria and Osrhoene) in this early period we also have the compelling – if difficult to interpret – *Acts of Thomas*, which seems also to have emerged in both Greek and Syriac versions simultaneously.⁸¹ It relates how the reluctant missionary Thomas is sold into slavery by Jesus and shipped off to ‘India’, converting princes along the way, until finally being martyred and, in the Greek version at least, having his body sent back to ‘the West’ (εἰς τὰ τῆς δύσεως μέρη) – specifically, to Edessa, according to later tradition.⁸² Here the ‘encratic’ vision of salvation apart from marriage and sexual relations is more clearly on display, which is probably one reason the Manichaeans adopted the *Acts of Thomas* for their canon of apocryphal texts.⁸³ Indeed, in the *Manichaean Psalm Book* (surviving in Syriac), the Greek ἐγκρατεία corresponds to the Syriac *qaddišutā*, a watchword of early asceticism among Syriac-speaking Christians in the fourth century.⁸⁴ It is worth adducing in this respect the evidence of Mani’s own writings from the mid-third century: of seven main works, he wrote six in Syriac and one in Persian, none in Greek.⁸⁵

In the fourth century, the prolific authors Aphrahat (fl. 337–345) and Ephrem (c.306–373) wrote in an idiomatic Syriac style that shows less acquaintance with – indeed, less interest in – Greek than does the bilingual milieu of the second and third centuries.⁸⁶ It would seem that from Aphrahat to the beginning of the seventh century, the role of Greek in Syriac Christianity went through successive stages of development, from repulsion to attraction. Robert Murray pointed to the idiomatic style of fourth-century Syriac as being perhaps a hint about anti-Greek proclivities

⁸⁰ See Perrin 2002 and Quispel 1975.

⁸¹ Klijn 2003 and H.J.W. Drijvers 1984, §1.

⁸² Klijn 2003, 251.

⁸³ Poirier 1998.

⁸⁴ Murray 1982, 7. And another Syriac ascetic watchword *'iḥidayā* becomes the Greek root *μοναχός* in the Coptic version of the *Gospel of Thomas* (*ibid.*, 8).

⁸⁵ Taylor 2002, 324.

⁸⁶ Brock 1982. Aphrahat: ed. Graffin et al. 1894–1926, vols. 1–2; new English translation, Lehto 2010.

(i.e., style as ideology).⁸⁷ Sebastian Brock, in an influential and provocative essay – ‘From Antagonism to Assimilation: Syriac Attitudes to Greek Learning’ – appearing in the same volume as Murray’s, stated this proposal even more strongly by claiming that these two writers in particular, but also fifth-century Syriac writers such as Jacob of Serugh (c.451–521), were outright ‘antagonistic’ toward the Greek heritage in Christianity, while also perhaps intentionally cloaking whatever knowledge of pagan Greek culture they may have possessed.⁸⁸ Brock goes much further than Murray in claiming that this period witnessed an ‘unhellenized’ and ‘essentially Semitic’ stage of Syriac culture.⁸⁹

It is difficult to imagine that, over the course of the later third and early fourth centuries, Syriac authors lost the innate acquaintance with Greek genres, ideas, and language that they displayed around 150–250 CE. This is especially the case considering the less acknowledged fact that fourth- and fifth-century Syriac authors are demonstrably acquainted with the Syriac literature of the early period, burdened as it may have been with the ‘cultural baggage’ of the Greeks. Ephrem certainly knew Bardaisan’s work as well as the *Acts of Thomas*: he wrote polemical works against followers of the former and knew exegetical traditions about Thomas represented by the latter.⁹⁰ Therefore, one could ask whether ‘hellenization’ or ‘de-hellenization’ is a useful metric for discussing this cultural shift.⁹¹ Brock seems to equate the cultural concepts of ‘Greek’ and ‘hellenization’ with paganism throughout and, consequently, to accept the ideology Ephrem tries to communicate through his style (if we follow Murray) and explicitly in his poetry (that Syriac Christians must beware of ‘the bitter poison of the wisdom of the Greeks’).⁹² This approach is somewhat antithetical to the present argument in the sense that Greek in Late Antiquity is not necessarily a pagan or a Christian property, even as both groups identified themselves with Greek.⁹³ Instead, it is a vehicle for communication, exchange, and self-definition, and one which proves incredibly useful for Christians in the Near East.

Even for the later period – the period of ‘assimilation’ – Brock concentrates on the translation of Aristotle and other classical philosophers,⁹⁴ while only briefly

⁸⁷ Murray 1982, 9.

⁸⁸ Brock 1982.

⁸⁹ Brock 1982, 17. The same language is used at Brock 1977, 1 and Brock 1996a, 253 (‘both represent Christianity in a relatively pure Semitic, and as yet unhellenized form’).

⁹⁰ On Ephrem’s polemical-heresiological writings, see Shepherdson 2008.

⁹¹ As in Brock 1982, 18, 22, 24; Brock 1977, 5. Compare the work of Ute Possekel (1999) on the subject of the Greek philosophical background in Ephrem’s poetry.

⁹² Ephrem *Hymns on Faith* 2.24, ed. Beck (CSCO 154–155).

⁹³ See also Aaron Johnson 2012.

⁹⁴ Brock 1982, 25–28. On the reception of Aristotle among Syriac authors, see now Syros 2011; Watt 2009; and Lössl and Watt 2011.

dwelling on the translators laboring to bring Greek theological works into Syriac: for example, Paul of Kallinikos (fl. c.528), Moses of Inghilene (fl. c.568–569), Paul of Tella (fl. c.615) and Thomas of Harkel (fl. c.615) outside Alexandria, Paul of Edessa on Cyprus (fl. c.623/4), Candidatus of Amid (fl. c.665), Athanasius of Nisibis (fl. c.668/9), Phokas of Edessa (d. 686), and Jacob of Edessa (d.708) at the monastery-scriptorium of Qenneshre on the banks of the Euphrates.⁹⁵ These translators are just as much a part of Syriac ‘hellenization’ as Syriac translators of Aristotle and Porphyry, and often individual translators were simultaneously engaged on both sacred and secular texts, e.g., Sergius of Resh‘aina and Jacob of Edessa.⁹⁶ In this perspective – looking at the c.200 efflorescence alongside the post-500 ‘assimilation’ – the ‘idiomatic’ age of fourth- and fifth-century Syriac writing seems more like an aberration, or even an age of intentional retrenchment, rather than deserving of the language of confidence and self-expression that usually describes it.⁹⁷ A better approach might be to ask what cultural or political factors were in place during this relatively short window of time that could have prevented the likes of Aphrahat, Ephrem, and Jacob of Serugh from engaging Greek patristic literature more fully.⁹⁸ If the enormous corpus of ‘Ephrem Graecus’ (much of which is pseudepigraphical) is any indication, the Greek Christian world was certainly eager to learn from the fourth-century master of theological poetry in Syriac.⁹⁹ Indeed, Jerome claims to have read ‘Ephrem’ in Greek less than twenty years after the poet’s death.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁵ Cf. Brock 1982, 23–24 and 30 n.10; Brock 1983, 2. In separate publications Brock focused on Syriac translations of the Greek Old and New Testaments and their significance for Syriac theology (e.g., Brock 1981). See also Brock 1977; 1979; 1996a.

⁹⁶ One might point out here that not all later Syriac writers participated in the ‘assimilation’ process: ‘The Syriac texts of mid-sixth-century writers such as John of Ephesus and Daniel of Ҫalah, and the late seventh-century apocalypse of Pseudo-Methodius, contain relatively few Greek loanwords and reveal only limited interference from Greek’ (Taylor 2002, 329). On Sergius of Resh‘aina as translator, see McCollum 2009a; 2009b. On Jacob of Edessa, see Romeny 2008.

⁹⁷ This is quite a separate question from that of the stylistic quality or literary value of ‘idiomatic’ fourth-century Syriac vis-à-vis earlier or later Syriac. Compare this statement: ‘indeed, it could be said that [the conjunction of Greek and Syriac] effectively destroyed the creativity of Syriac writers in the one field in which they excelled, religious poetry,’ (Brock 1982, 30). Brock elsewhere places the transition more firmly around 500 CE, though he acknowledges a gradual progression of the prestige of the Greek languages (Brock 1983, 4–5).

⁹⁸ On this point, see Millar 2011, which is a helpful contextualization but with which the present literary history is largely at odds.

⁹⁹ On Ephrem Graecus, see Lash 2003; Taylor 1998; and Hemmerdinger-Iliadou 1960–1961. The large corpus is listed by work at CPG 2.366–468.

¹⁰⁰ Brock 1977, 13; Taylor 1998.

On this point of external views of Syriac Christianity, no less a Hellenophile than Eusebius of Caesarea (c.260–c.340) – a contemporary of Aphrahat – grants Edessa a prominent place alongside other major cities in the Holy Land.¹⁰¹ Eusebius claims, as was claimed for Africanus as well,¹⁰² to have visited the archives of Edessa and to have translated texts from Syriac into Greek.¹⁰³ We may question the amount of Syriac he really knew, but the point stands that Edessa and Palestine were understood to be close associates in the third and fourth centuries (and later too, as we will see). Further, fourth-century Edessa was not just popular among Greek scholars attracted to the Syriac archives; the pilgrim Egeria, mentioned above, took a significant detour along her return journey to visit Edessa and Ḥaran, and at one point in her account she even laments her inability to reach the city of Nisibis, which by her time (384) was situated outside the safe bounds of the Roman empire (from the time of Julian's failed Persian campaign of 363).¹⁰⁴

Looking across that border with her, we can now acknowledge something she could hardly have known – and formal documentation continues to grow – that at the same time (late fourth and fifth centuries), the Syriac Christians of the Sasanian Persian empire (later known as the Church of the East), from Nisibis and other centers, were initiating significant missionary journeys along the Silk Road.¹⁰⁵ These journeys resulted in the translation of numerous Christian writings into new languages such as Sogdian – Syriac thus providing a necessary conduit for Christian works originally written in Greek – as well as, ultimately, in the erection of the

¹⁰¹ See Brock 1992a. As Brock notes, the claim that the ruling Abgarids converted to Christianity prior to their submission to Rome is not sustainable. For a balanced picture of the role of Christianity among the early third-century Edessene elite, see Adler 2004.

¹⁰² The claim is made by the fifth-century Armenian historian Moses of Khoren that '[Africanus] transcribed everything from the charters of the archive of Edessa, that is Urha, which concerned the history of our kings. These books had been transported there from Nisibis and from the temple histories of Sinope in Pontus. Let no one doubt this, for we have seen that archive with our own eyes' (Frag. T88, ed. Wallraff et al. 2007, 261; Adler 2004, 535 n.59; 2009, 3). Africanus famously debated Origen's assertion of the canonicity of the book of Susanna based on Greek puns not available in the Hebrew language, but this does not mean he certainly knew Hebrew well enough to understand the question himself: see further at Adler 2009, 4; S.F. Johnson 2007; and, generally, Neuschäfer 1987.

¹⁰³ *HE* 1.13. The following statement from Millar is unnecessarily skeptical: 'But no-one will believe that Eusebius visited Edessa himself and read this material in Syriac, or could have' (Millar 2011, 105). Millar does not note the precedent of Julius Africanus. One could point also to Eusebius' *Onomasticon* as evidence of his scholarly familiarity with the larger landscape of Palestine, Syria, and Mesopotamia.

¹⁰⁴ Egeria 20.12, ed. Maraval 2002, 220–221. For these visits and their literary context, see also S.F. Johnson 2008; 2010; and 2012b.

¹⁰⁵ See the eye-opening articles in Malek 2006; Winkler and Tang 2009; and Tang and Winkler 2013.

‘Nestorian Monument’ near Xi’an, China in 781 CE, a bilingual *stele* in Chinese and Syriac describing the growth of the East Syrian Church in China from the time of its arrival in 635.¹⁰⁶ Given this eastward expansion – admirably surveyed recently elsewhere (Walker 2012) – it is notable that, in the time of Egeria, inscriptional evidence for the language of Syriac was making a lesser known westward push and appears for the first time across the Euphrates, where it had not existed previously.¹⁰⁷ The earliest dated Syriac Christian inscription west of the Euphrates actually comes from near Aleppo in northern Syria: its editors have tentatively dated it to 406/7 CE.¹⁰⁸ It was part of a mosaic decorating a Christian monastery and lists a number of the clerics involved in its installation: the names of these clerics are both Greek and Aramaic in origin. In other words, Syriac Christianity, having already interacted extensively with Greek ideas, imagery, and texts within the region of Edessa and Osrohene, had begun, at the opening of the fifth century, to express itself alongside Greek Christian culture in Roman Syria. Furthermore, toward the East, venturing deep into territory previously explored only by Alexander the Great and his successors, Syriac missionaries were exceeding by far even Alexander’s legendary reach.

As for the status of Greek on the background of this linguistic cross-fertilization, the evidence of a fourth-century Greek inscription in Nisibis is striking: this is the earliest Christian inscription to be found in Mesopotamia (359/60), and it is in Greek.¹⁰⁹ The inscription records the completion of the baptistery there by the bishop Vologaeses and the presbyter Akepsymas. While it is dangerous to generalize about language use on the basis of inscriptions, this one may at the least suggest that Egeria’s desire to reach Nisibis is not so idiosyncratic among Roman Christians as it seems at first blush. On some level Hellenization was already part of the cultural inheritance of the Christian church in Nisibis. This was clearly linked with the Romanization of the region but was not coterminous with it. Ephrem himself while at Nisibis (before 363) appears very pro-Roman: the Christian church is the ‘Church of the Empire’, which in his mind is a good thing.¹¹⁰ Moreover, regarding Ephrem, recent studies have suggested that the ‘poison of the wisdom of the Greeks’ quip mentioned above may be a hostility aimed only at Greek pagan philosophy, which Ephrem seems to have known intimately (Stoicism and Platonism above

¹⁰⁶ On Sogdian Christian texts, see Sims-Williams 1985; 2014. On the ‘Nestorian Monument’, see Pelliot 1996. A new edition and translation of the Nestorian Monument has been produced by Eccles and Lieu 2013.

¹⁰⁷ Millar 1998, 166; Taylor 2002; Briquel Chatonnet and Desreumaux 2011a.

¹⁰⁸ Briquel Chatonnet and Desreumaux 2011b. There is an earlier undated bilingual inscription in Greek and Syriac from Jebel Bārīshā (*IGLS* 2.555) which belongs to the late fourth century: see Taylor 2002, 304.

¹⁰⁹ Canali De Rossi 2004, no. 60. See also Millar 2006b, 322; Possekel 1999, 18–19.

¹¹⁰ Griffith 1986a; Russell 2005.

all).¹¹¹ Elsewhere, when criticizing some Greek-speaking Christians, Ephrem seems focused on certain Arian theologians of his day rather than Christian expression in Greek in general.¹¹²

The language of Greek in the third to sixth centuries was a language of prestige among eastern Christians. In some cases that prestige was merely totemic and did not affect the native patterns of cultural expression (as may often be the case with inscriptions). In other cases Greek was taken as a model for literature and was actively cultivated (for instance, in the dynamic context of Edessa c.200). In normal use, Greek was applied in certain types of literary or linguistic scenarios and not in others, but even such patterns as existed were not yet standardized in Ephrem's day, nor in his very important cultural milieux of Nisibis and Edessa. Subsequent generations of Greek learners, speakers, and writers among these eastern Christian communities would reorient the patterns to suit the needs of changing theological and imperial landscapes.

V. THE FIRST GOLDEN AGE: SYRIA AND PALESTINE, FIFTH TO SIXTH CENTURIES

To begin in greater Roman Syria in the later fourth and fifth centuries, two Greek writers with intimate knowledge of Syriac language and culture played a very important role in the theological controversies of their day and left substantial corpora in Greek: Eusebius of Emesa (c.300–c.360) and Theodoret of Cyrrhus (c.393–c.466). Both were closely associated with the Antiochene patriarchate and, consequently, have been identified with the 'Antiochene School' of exegesis.¹¹³ The founders of this School are usually held to be Diodore of Tarsus (the teacher of John Chrysostom) and Theodore of Mopsuestia (the teacher of Nestorius). However, Eusebius of Emesa himself was said to have been a teacher of both Diodore and Theodore, so perhaps it is better to view him as the founder of the School.¹¹⁴ Even though he is not traditionally cited as one of the main proponents of Antiochene Christology – coming too early for standard histories of Christological debate – it does now seem to have been an important element of Eusebius of Emesa's theological teaching.¹¹⁵ Eusebius of Emesa had been a student of Eusebius of Caesarea and Patrophilus of Scythopolis, giving him a Palestinian Christian pedigree

¹¹¹ Possekel 1999.

¹¹² Russell 1994; Griffith 1991.

¹¹³ I am here using 'Antiochene School' as a school of thought or method instead of as an institution, following Romeny 1997, 9. On the broader contours of the Antiochene exegetical tradition, see Young 1997; and, as revealed specifically through the works of John Chrysostom, Amirav 2003.

¹¹⁴ See now Winn 2011 for Eusebius' context.

¹¹⁵ Wiles 1989; Winn 2011, 187–224.

early in his career (though one with tinges of Arianism).¹¹⁶ Further, it seems he was offered the patriarchate of Alexandria upon Athanasius' death, and possibly also the patriarchate of Antioch even before that.¹¹⁷ While he refused to accept either See, his time in Alexandria, Palestine, and Antioch gave him a very broad exposure to Christianity in the East, among Greek, Aramaic (Syriac and CPA), and possibly Coptic speakers alike. It is thus in Eusebius of Emesa, and in Theodoret of Cyrrhus after him – and not with the more famous Origen and Eusebius of Caesarea – that we see Greek Christian authors (who are writing natively in Greek on the ground in the Levant) interacting with the full range of eastern Christian traditions available at that time. Moreover, it has been shown that both Eusebius of Emesa and Theodoret knew and interacted with Syriac, directly through the Peshitta translation and indirectly through ideas coming from the Syriac milieu.¹¹⁸

For Theodoret of Cyrrhus, writing in that period when there is growing epigraphic evidence for Syriac west of the Euphrates,¹¹⁹ it still appears (as for Eusebius of Emesa) that Greek was his dominant language, not just in terms of the language he chose to write in but also in terms of the language of his biblical source material (the Septuagint) and his theological frame of reference (Diodore of Tarsus and Theodore of Mopsuestia; and in his works against Cyril of Alexandria).¹²⁰ This is the case despite the two facts that Theodoret spent the vast majority of his career in the provinces of Syria and Euphratensis – only leaving to visit Jerusalem once, and Ephesus and Chalcedon on two occasions, for the Ecumenical Councils – and that he shows an acquaintance with the Peshitta, as mentioned, and also with the Hebrew Bible.¹²¹ Theodoret, like Theodore and John Chrysostom before him, was from a wealthy Antiochene background and demonstrates from the earliest stage – in the *Cure for Hellenic Maladies*, written in his late 20s (c.430) – a deep and subtle knowledge of Greek pagan literature, mythology, and philosophy.¹²² Nevertheless, his local knowledge of the Aramaic speakers of his region is equally impressive: he

¹¹⁶ Romeny 1997, 9.

¹¹⁷ Winn 2011, 1–2; Romeny 1997, 9 n.10.

¹¹⁸ Romeny 1997, 9–10 and *passim*. On Theodoret, see Millar 2007. For Eusebius of Emesa, this does not seem to have extended to Hebrew, despite the common assumption that his *Commentary on Genesis* represents direct interaction with the Hebrew text. See Romeny 1997, 10: 'In sum, Eusebius was bilingual [in Greek and Syriac]. There are no unambiguous data to support the assumption that he also knew Hebrew.'

¹¹⁹ Taylor 2002, 304.

¹²⁰ Millar 2007, 110.

¹²¹ Millar 2007, 114, 122–124.

¹²² Ed. Canivet 2000–2001. See Papadogiannakis 2012.

distinguishes the dialects of the ‘Osrhoenoi’, ‘Syroi’, ‘Euphratesioi’, ‘Palestinoi’, and ‘Phoinikes’ and knows there are major differences between them.¹²³

Summarizing the linguistic situation in Syria among Christians in this period, David Taylor says the following:

From the point of view of *diglossia*, one can make a number of observations. Greek is the language used by both pagans and Christians, with Greek, Aramaic, and Arabic names. It is also clearly the language of the earliest Christian liturgies in the region, for there are numerous inscriptions above the doorways of private houses, as well as churches, which contain citations from these liturgies ... Greek inscriptions were often placed above doorways in Syria to proclaim the conversion of the household to Christianity, and there are many more which seem to have an apotropaic function. These inscriptions might simply represent the continuation of the tradition of using Greek for public inscriptions, or they might suggest that in the early period of Christian expansion Greek was explicitly identified as the language of Christian faith and worship.¹²⁴

This conclusion corroborates (albeit in a lower register) the picture of Greek as the dominant, identifying Christian literary language in Syria through the fifth century.

However, two necessary and important caveats need to be put forward at the same time as any statement of Greek’s predominance.¹²⁵ The first caveat is that Aramaic (often Syriac) was always part of the frame of reference of these authors and, in particular, some of the Greek authors more neglected by scholars to date – namely Eusebius of Emesa and Theodoret of Cyrrhus – show a greater familiarity with Syriac language and literature than is typically acknowledged for the period and region.

The second caveat is that theological allegiances across languages may mean more in the fifth century than epigraphic and anecdotal evidence is able to show. Theodoret’s strongly dyophysite Christology – first, in opposition to Cyril of Alexandria, then confirmed at Chalcedon in 451, and finally condemned (in part) at Constantinople II in 553 – connects him *in his own period and later* more to (East) Syrian Christianity than to the dominant Greek Christology of the Mediterranean.¹²⁶

¹²³ Taylor 2002, 302. See Tompkins 1993 for the role Theodoret’s letters can play in reconstructing his local self-awareness; the letters have been edited and translated by Azéma 1982. See also Urbainczyk 2000 and 2002 on Theodoret’s local pride and attempts to compete, especially in the *Religious History*, with Egypt’s reputation for asceticism. Further, on definitions of ‘Syrians’ in this period, see Millar 2013b, 44–45; Shepherdson 2009; and Wood 2012.

¹²⁴ Taylor 2002, 315.

¹²⁵ I do not feel that Millar (2007; 2011) has sufficiently acknowledged these two points.

¹²⁶ See now Clayton 2007 and Schor 2011.

One could put it another way: who is the last ‘Nestorian’ writer who writes fluently in Greek?¹²⁷ Nestorius himself wrote the *Bazaar of Heracleides* in Greek at the very end of his life around 450,¹²⁸ and Theodoret was, of course, still writing in the 460s. From the 470s on, all the other writers in Syria (and further east) of a strong dyophysite persuasion were writing in Syriac.¹²⁹ One could possibly make the case that all the Greek dyophysite writers had by then become Chalcedonians,¹³⁰ but given the backlash against ‘Nestorians’ and ‘Origenists’ in the sixth century, it seems there was, in the post-Chalcedonian eastern empire, at least a perceived threat of authentic Antiochene-School theologians still circulating in the Greek world (or at least their writings circulating in Greek).¹³¹ In other words, while one might trumpet the Christian Hellenism of Theodoret in opposition to an older approach that would have called him ‘Syrian’,¹³² theologically speaking he is clearly one of

¹²⁷ For problems with the label ‘Nestorian’, see Brock 1996b.

¹²⁸ Surviving in Syriac: ed. Bedjan 1910; trans. Driver and Hodgson 1925. See Wessel 2004 for the theological context.

¹²⁹ This point makes the absence of Syriac at the Councils of Ephesus (431) and Chalcedon (451) less sensational, *contra* Millar 2006b.

¹³⁰ As does the CPG from the beginning of the sixth century: it reduces the fluid fifth-century structure to two categories for doctrinal writers: ‘diphysitae’ and ‘monophysitae’. The former category includes ‘Leontius Byzantinus’ and ‘Imperator Justinianus’, signaling that we have clearly left the world of Theodoret behind.

¹³¹ On the so-called ‘Three Chapters’ controversy, see Price 2009, 1.76–98; Hombergen 2001; and also the articles in Chazelle and Cubitt 2007.

¹³² Millar 2007. Recently Millar has argued on the basis of Theodoret’s letters to Ibas of Edessa that ecclesiastical communication among Antiochene dyophysite bishops occurred solely in Greek (Millar 2012, 155). I would argue, by contrast, that the only things Theodoret’s letters show us (in this regard) are that the recipients of his letters *understood* Greek (or were expected to) and that Theodoret chose to write to them in Greek; it does not show that Theodoret did not receive letters in Syriac nor does it show what the proclivities for *writing* letters in Syriac might have been among his correspondents and constituents. As Millar notes (*ibid.*), we have no surviving letters from Ibas *except for* the Syriac *Letter to Mari the Persian* which was translated into Greek for the sake of the First Council of Ephesus (431), condemned in Greek at the Second Council of Ephesus (449), reviewed in Greek at the Council of Chalcedon (451), collected in Greek as part of the Three Chapters controversy (536), and condemned in Greek at the Second Council of Constantinople (553). The surviving Syriac letter (which may be a retranslation from the intermediate Greek version) survives in a manuscript copied near Apamea in 535 – which contains a selection in Syriac of the Acta of the Second Council of Ephesus (449; see Millar 2009b) – and is re-edited and discussed at length in Millar 2012. Even though the Second Council of Ephesus (449) and the Council of Chalcedon (451) both quoted Ibas’ *Letter* in Greek on the floor, the Acta of the Second Council of Constantinople (553) – which finally condemned the *Letter* as heretical and, for this reason, included a copy of the *Letter* – survive only in Latin translation (Millar 2012, 155–156).

the last dyophysite Antiochene theologians writing in Greek, and it is precisely his Antiochene associations (through Theodore of Mopsuestia and Nestorius) that were to get his writings against Cyril of Alexandria anathematized in the Three Chapters controversy in 536 and the Second Council of Constantinople in 553.¹³³

One might argue that even in the 460s, when taken on his own terms, Theodoret is already a dinosaur. It is perhaps no coincidence that Theodoret's contemporary Narsai (c.399–c.502) – writing completely in Syriac – left the school of Edessa (in the Roman empire) to help found the school of Nisibis (outside the Roman empire) in 471, only five years after Theodoret's death.¹³⁴ This happened perhaps with the foresight that the emperor Leo would close down the school of Edessa in 489.¹³⁵ In the subsequent century, the head of the school of Nisibis, Mar Aba (d. 552), trained East Syrian luminaries such as Cyrus of Edessa and Thomas of Edessa, though is perhaps most famous for converting Cosmas Indicopleustes, presumably the last strictly 'Nestorian' author writing natively in Greek.¹³⁶ However, Cosmas is an outlier in this narrative, since he was not writing doctrinal literature nor was he writing in Syria like Theodoret, but in sixth-century Alexandria, which was by then dominated by miaphysite writers. Presumably Mar Aba, like many of his contemporaries in the Syriac world, knew Greek well, but, aside from his proselytizing in Alexandria and the mention in his *Life* of translation/commentary work (*pšq*) from Greek books (ed. Bedjan 1893, 218), we do not have any evidence that he wrote natively in that language.

It is the one-nature miaphysites ('Monophysites') who take the place of dyophysite Greek writers in Syria, and not the Chalcedonians.¹³⁷ Specifically, after 485 (twenty years after Theodoret's death), the churches of Theodoret's province, Euphratensis, were being led by the miaphysite Syriac bishop Philoxenos of

¹³³ Schor 2011, 201: 'The Antiochenes [after 451] were split up and subsumed within larger networks, leaving a fragmented but important legacy.'

¹³⁴ For Narsai's life, see Becker 2008, 47–72. For the school of Nisibis, see Vööbus 1965, Becker 2006b, and Reinink 1995. Reinink has labeled this late fifth-century dyophysite world as 'a pluriform Antiochene and Edesene tradition' (1995, 89).

¹³⁵ Vööbus 1965, 24–56.

¹³⁶ For the East Syrian legacy of Theodore of Mopsuestia in the fifth to seventh centuries, see Becker 2006a and Reinink 1995. Brock argues that it was under the headship of Mar Aba that Aristotle began being taught at the School of Nisibis (Brock 1982, 21–22, 26); see also Watt 2010, §I, 64; and Maas 2003. For Cosmas Indicopleustes, see Wolska-Conus 1962; ed. and trans. Wolska-Conus 1968; and see now Kominko 2013.

¹³⁷ This milieu was fortified by the important Syriac translations of Cyril of Alexandria's works made over the course of the fifth, sixth, and early seventh centuries (King 2008). On the term 'miaphysite', a modern coinage which I have used here for convenience, see Millar 2013b, 52 (where it is suggested this term should be abandoned because it is a neologism). The term was recommended by Winkler 1997 and has since become standard in the scholarly literature.

Mabbug (d.523).¹³⁸ While there was a noticeable miaphysite reaction to the emperor Zeno's *Henotikon* (482), there was no coordinated Antiochene response.¹³⁹ Severus of Antioch (c.459–538), who had studied law at Berytus (almost certainly in Latin) and spent time at Peter the Iberian's monastery near Gaza (Maiuma), was the leading light of miaphysite Christianity in the Roman empire during the late fifth and early sixth centuries – unlike Philoxenos, Severus wrote in Greek.¹⁴⁰ However, Severus' writings, including copious sermon and letter collections, were translated into Syriac very quickly – many by his younger contemporary, Paul of Kallinikos – and today survive almost solely in that language (though many works are lost).¹⁴¹ Miaphysite hagiography flourished in the same circles as Severus' corpus, so that Greek works like the *Life of Peter the Iberian* (by John Rufus, later bishop of Maiuma; d. c.520) became part of the western Syriac canon seemingly as soon as they were written.¹⁴² The monks of Palestine in the mid- to late fifth century were not universally Chalcedonian: many of them found Juvenal of Jerusalem's acquiescence at the Council of Chalcedon difficult to accept.¹⁴³ This schism resulted in the creation of the anti-Chalcedonian church in Palestine.¹⁴⁴ However, their movement (represented by the embassy of Severus to Constantinople) would be short-lived: by the time of Justin I's accession in 518 the Greek Chalcedonians dominated (and would continue to dominate) Palestine, and the Greco-Syriac anti-Chalcedonians had either dissipated or become part of the West Syrian miaphysite church.¹⁴⁵ Nevertheless, the doctrinal conversations continued, particularly up to and during

¹³⁸ Schor 2011, 204; Michelson 2007. It has been said that Philoxenos is the first bishop known who wrote in Syriac and occupied an episcopal see west of the Euphrates (Millar 2011, 109).

¹³⁹ Evagrius Scholasticus, *HE* 3.16.

¹⁴⁰ See the Syriac *Life of Severus* by Zacharias of Mytilene: Brock and FitzGerald 2013; Ambjörn 2008; with Torrance 1988; and Allen and Hayward 2004.

¹⁴¹ See Baumstark 1922, 160. Later translations and revisions are made by important Syriac scholars like Athanasius of Nisibis and Jacob of Edessa: see Lash 1981. For this reason, I would say the following claim by Millar is an over-interpretation: '[Severus] represents a wholly Greek aspect of the life of this wing of the Church' (Millar 2013b, 64). Clearly Severus was operating in thoroughly multilingual environments and was multilingual himself (to one degree or another).

¹⁴² Horn and Phenix 2008. Evagrius Scholasticus seems to know the Greek version: *HE* 2.5.8, 3.33.

¹⁴³ On Juvenal's long, see-saw career, see Honigmann 1950. Flusin 1996 makes the point that miaphysite texts were a crucial part of Palestinian hagiography.

¹⁴⁴ See Horn 2006 and Menze 2008.

¹⁴⁵ On this period in Severus' career, see now Alpi 2009. Kofsky 2004 tries to answer the problem of where the miaphysite monks in Palestine – which he calls the 'Beirut circle' because Peter the Iberian recruited from Berytus – disappeared to after 518 by claiming that sources such as Dorotheus of Gaza and the *Letters of Barsanuphius and John* from the

the Second Council of Constantinople in 553. Even if the official theological debates and decrees in Justinian's Constantinople mostly took place in Greek (Millar 2009a), a substantial body of Syriac theological literature emerged immediately afterwards in the eastern provinces.¹⁴⁶ Not the least is the impressive *Florilegium Edessenum*, a Syriac translation of the compendium of Greek patristic citations used to promote the Neo-Chalcedonian cause in Constantinople during the Council: this was translated within ten years of the Council itself.¹⁴⁷ Millar has himself drawn attention to a number of important sixth-century Syriac manuscripts, mostly in the British Library and the Vatican, that represent translations from Greek made very shortly after the original works were written (2013b, 65–68; 74–87).

Several different kinds of schools emerge in Palestine in the fifth and sixth centuries, all of them primarily teaching and writing in Greek. The most important of these are the rhetorical school at Gaza and the monastic schools at Gaza (miaphysite, for a time) and at St Sabas and St Chariton near Jerusalem (Chalcedonian). The rhetorical school at Gaza was directly connected to the school of Libanius in Antioch during the fourth century and remained active through the sixth century, under the leadership of Timothy,¹⁴⁸ Aeneas, Procopius, and Choricius (all with the epithet 'of Gaza').¹⁴⁹ Procopius is often celebrated as a master of secular *encomia* and *ekphraseis* but is also credited with inventing the genre of the biblical *catena*, which may link him to the same tradition in Syriac as well.¹⁵⁰ Choricius delivered a famous funeral oration for Procopius (sometime between 526 and 535/6), and this and several other works of his became standard pedagogical models for students in Byzantium.¹⁵¹ A different Procopius, Procopius of Caesarea, the sixth-century historian, studied rhetoric at Gaza before beginning his political

early sixth century are crypto-miaphysite, 'adopting a Chalcedonian or neo-Chalcedonian veneer, and retreating to a monastic life of quietist piety and theological tolerance.'

¹⁴⁶ The miaphysite theological corpus is huge, though well represented for the sixth century by the collection of Roey and Allen 1994. The corpus of East Syrian Christological writing during this period and later is well represented by Abramowski and Goodman 1972. For important examples of pro-Chalcedonian writing in Syriac during this period, see Roey 1972.

¹⁴⁷ Ed. Rücker 1933. See King 2008, 10 n.34.

¹⁴⁸ Bodenheimer and Rabinowitz 1949.

¹⁴⁹ Downey 1958; see now Saliou 2005 and Amato 2010.

¹⁵⁰ Chauvot 1986; Talgam 2004; Romeny 2007. As with the seemingly bifurcated corpus of the epic poet Nonnus of Panopolis in the fifth century, scholars have over-interpreted the distinct nature of Procopius' secular and sacred writings, ignoring the stringent requirements of genre, as recent studies have shown (Romeny 2007, 190). The reception of classical literature in eastern Christianity is beyond the remit of this study, but is discussed in several recent publications (Papadogiannakis 2012; Schwartz 2013; Aaron Johnson 2012; Agosti 2012).

¹⁵¹ Panella 2009; Amato 2010; Greco 2010.

and historiographical career at Constantinople.¹⁵² Furthermore, Gaza had a strong poetical school, as witnessed by the late fifth-/early sixth-century poet John of Gaza, who wrote a verse *ekphrasis* on the *tabula mundi* (ἔκφρασις τοῦ κοσμικοῦ πίνακος) in the baths of (probably) Antioch prior to their destruction by earthquake in 526.¹⁵³ This important secular tradition was not static in the sense that only locals studied at Gaza: it was a pan-eastern Mediterranean hub for Greek, buoyed by the monumentalization of the Holy Land and Christian pilgrimage.¹⁵⁴ The rhetorical school at Gaza can nevertheless be linked to the monasteries nearby – Peter the Iberian's Maiuma has already been mentioned – with which the rhetorical scholars directly interacted.¹⁵⁵ Unlike Berytus, where the local bishop ordered the burning of books and the arrest of some students at the law school for participating in pagan religious rites, the rhetorical and monastic schools of Gaza seem to have been much more closely integrated with one another.¹⁵⁶

At the least, it should be noted that, despite the scholarly attention paid to secular genres among the main Gaza authors at the turn of the sixth century, there is a strong admixture of Christian topics and genres in their work which supports the picture of a more broadly defined Hellenism in this period. For instance, in the sixth century, Zacharias of Mytilene ('Zacharias Rhetor'), author of a biography of Severus of Antioch (surviving in Syriac), wrote a Greek dialogue called the *Ammonios* – named after the contemporary Neoplatonic teacher of Alexandria (d. 526) – in imitation of Aeneas of Gaza's own *Theophrastus*, in both of which texts these famous Greek pagan teachers are convinced by philosophical argument to convert to Christianity.¹⁵⁷ Indeed, Gaza's connection to the educational hub of Alexandria is of the utmost importance: almost all of the Palestinian Greek authors in the fifth and sixth century were educated there.¹⁵⁸ In Alexandria they joined ranks with other

¹⁵² Averil Cameron 1985.

¹⁵³ See Downey 1958, 311–312; Alan Cameron 1993; Talgam 2009; Lauritzen 2011; and now Champion 2014.

¹⁵⁴ Downey 1958, 302–303; Romeny 2007, 188; Stroumsa 1989. On pilgrimage to the Holy Land during this period, see the surveys of Hunt 1982 and Maraval 2002.

¹⁵⁵ Bitton-Ashkelony and Kofsky 2006. Millar 2013b, 77 emphasizes the 'powerful tradition' of miaphysite Greek at Gaza as seen in Zacharias of Mytilene (probably the same person as 'Zacharias Rhetor') whose *Ecclesiastical History* (c. 495) survives as the first two books of a later Syriac translation and compilation made in 569 CE. For this *Ecclesiastical History*, see now Greatrex, Phenix, and Horn 2011.

¹⁵⁶ Ashkenazi 2004, esp. 206–207; and Romeny 2007, esp. 189–190. An indirect testimony of the strength of the miaphysites in Gaza can be found in Procopius' *Panegyric to Anastasius*: this public lecture was delivered in the jurisdiction of Patriarch Elias of Jerusalem, a staunch Chalcedonian with no sympathy for Anastasius' policies (Ashkenazi 2004, 204–205).

¹⁵⁷ Downey 1958, 309–310; Watts 2006b. *Ammonios* ed. Minniti Colonna 1973; *Theophrastus* ed. Minniti Colonna 1958. Both now translated in Gertz, Dillon, and Russell 2012.

¹⁵⁸ Downey 1958, *passim*; Watts 2004, 16.

students very different from one another in background and literary interest: for instance, Severus of Antioch (miaphysite theologian); John Philoponus (miaphysite philosopher); and Cosmas Indicopleustes ('Nestorian' cosmographer). Romanos the Melode, originally from Emesa in Syria, studied at Berytus like Severus but, instead of following these contemporaries to Alexandria, made his poetical career in Justinian's Constantinople, where he introduced congregations and readers to numerous poetic images and meters previously found only in Syriac.¹⁵⁹

Berytus did not, however, represent a separate educational trajectory to the capital but itself had direct connections with various other centers, including Egypt. In addition to the evidence of Severus' career in both Berytus and Alexandria (and later in exile in Lower Egypt), two fourth-century funeral orations (*epikedia*) for professors at Berytus have been found among the papyri at Hermopolis: they testify to the existence of a school of Greek rhetoric at Berytus, alongside the familiar Latin legal training.¹⁶⁰ Moreover, it might be emphasized that there is a continuity between the Palestinian world and Egypt also in the evidence for the study of Latin. For instance, we know that Latin was being taught in Gaza as late as the sixth century, by a Hierius, who appears in the letters of Procopius of Gaza, and, as Downey, Wasserstein, and others have emphasized, the sixth-century Nessana papyri from the Negev contain fragments of Virgil's *Aeneid* (bks 1, 2, and 4) and a thousand-word Greek-Latin glossary (PColt 1).¹⁶¹ Likewise, a number of Latin papyri, in both deluxe and schoolroom editions, have been found in Egypt, mostly dating to the fourth and fifth centuries.¹⁶² *Codex Bezae Cantabrigiensis*, a deluxe bilingual Greek-Latin manuscript of the Gospels, was probably produced in Berytus around 400, and corresponds to the deluxe manuscripts from Egypt in the same period.¹⁶³ Thus, there seems to have been a great deal of movement among students, teachers, and scribes in the eastern Mediterranean, working in various languages, and always in bilingual and multiconfessional environments.

¹⁵⁹ Ed. Maas and Trypanis 1963; with ed. Grosdidier de Matons 1964–1981 (de-emphasizing the role of Syriac). See also Johnson 2013, Appendix, on the relationship between Romanos and the Syriac tradition.

¹⁶⁰ Cribiore 2007, 54.

¹⁶¹ Downey 1958, 302–303; Wasserstein 2003. On Nessana, see Casson and Hettich 1950 and, now, Ruffini 2011. On Virgil in Greek in Late Antiquity and Byzantium, see Baldwin 1976; 1982; 1985. On the survival of Latin at the Berytus law school, see Hall 2004; 1999.

¹⁶² Cribiore 2007, 61.

¹⁶³ The Latin text of *Codex Bezae* is the most literal version of the Old Latin Gospels to have survived, so literal in fact that one can tell the Greek text is back-translated at points because it retains a number of errors that appear in the Latin: see Burton 2000, 22–23; Parker 1992; Parker and Amphoux 1996.

VI. GREEK, SYRIAC, AND COPTIC: THE CASE OF EGYPT, FOURTH TO TENTH CENTURIES

Already in the fourth century, the Coptic Christians of Egypt could claim an illustrious heritage in Greek literature: the fourth-century Greek *Life of Antony*, attributed to Athanasius of Alexandria, says it is a translation from a Coptic original.¹⁶⁴ This statement, while rhetorical in its literary value as a 'discovery' *topos*, nevertheless signals the potential cachet of Coptic as a language among Greek speakers in late antique Alexandria.¹⁶⁵ On the other hand, Greek writers in traditional or secular genres from the fourth to sixth centuries chose to write in Greek, and not Coptic, despite the growth in the significance of Coptic among Egyptian writers from the beginning of the fourth century.¹⁶⁶ One could cite the fifth-century wandering poet Nonnus of Panopolis, who wrote the longest surviving epic from antiquity, the *Dionysiaca*, as well as an elaborate verse paraphrase of the Gospel of John;¹⁶⁷ or the Neoplatonists Simplicius and Damascius (mid-sixth century), who taught and wrote extensive commentaries on Plato and Aristotle, first in Alexandria, then in Athens, and finally in the East following the closure of the Athenian academy in 529.¹⁶⁸ In fact, given the surviving corpus of Coptic literature, the idea that Nonnus or Damascius would have chosen to write in any language but Greek seems today almost farcical: effectively no secular literature is extant in Coptic (except the fragmentary, semi-Christianized *Alexander Romance* and *Cambyses Romance*, and the documentary papyri).¹⁶⁹ The insistent usage of Greek for secular genres seems obvious.

However, it is also true that Greek seems to grow in prominence among strictly religious genres (and alongside Coptic, Syriac, etc.) during the late sixth and early

¹⁶⁴ Whether or not it was originally written in Coptic, the appropriation of Coptic as a concept by a Greek author highlighting the ascetic prominence of his own region is reminiscent of Theodoret's characterization of the different dialects of Syriac/Aramaic which he knows of in his own diocese: see Urbainczyk 2000; 2002.

¹⁶⁵ On this topic generally, see the collection of papers in Papaconstantinou 2010, and Cribiore 1999. On Coptic, see also Boud'hors 2012.

¹⁶⁶ See Emmel 2007; Boud'hors 2012; and Richter 2006; 2009; 2010. However, note the important Greek–Coptic glossary to Hosea and Amos dated to the third century: Bell and Thompson 1925.

¹⁶⁷ Alan Cameron 1965; 2007; Hopkinson 1994; Spanoudakis 2014; see now the masterful survey of Nonnus' poetic world in Agosti 2012. The hexameter *Paraphrase of the Gospel of John* is currently being newly edited by a team of Italian scholars. See one of the recent volumes, Greco 2004, for bibliographical information.

¹⁶⁸ See Athanassiadi 1999; Watts 2005; 2006a.

¹⁶⁹ See Emmel 2007, 88; see also the article s.v. 'Romances' by Detlef Müller in the *Copt. Enc.* It has been suggested that the *Cambyses Romance* was redacted by a Syriac monk residing in Scetis in the seventh century: MacCoull 1982.

seventh centuries. To put it a different way, not one ancient Coptic manuscript can be situated (in origin) in Alexandria,¹⁷⁰ whereas there is a profusion of Greek writing, both secular and sacred, in Alexandria during the same period. Moreover, exceptions to prove the rule are the famous Syriac biblical translations made outside of Alexandria in the early seventh century – at the ‘Enaton’ monastery (the ninth mile-marker outside the city) – the so-called ‘Harklean’ New Testament produced by Thomas of Harkel and the *Syrohexapla* of Paul of Tella, which were the most Hellenophile to date and followed the syntax of Greek so closely that it is possible today to reconstruct the Greek *Vorlage* from the tortured Syriac.¹⁷¹ One might add to this the acknowledgement that the theological *Nachlass* of John Philoponus, who wrote originally in a bilingual Greco-Coptic environment (traceable from his own biblical quotations), exists today mostly in Syriac.¹⁷² This is not to suggest that Greek was unknown in Upper Egypt – far from it – but the linguistic situation there was much more diverse than can be attributed to Alexandria in this period. For instance, in the fourth century, three centuries earlier than the Harklean New Testament, Manichaeans were translating Syriac texts into Coptic at Kellis in the Dakhleh Oasis (Ismant el-Kharab).¹⁷³ There is also Coptic evidence of Manichaeans teaching Latin in the same place and at the same time.¹⁷⁴ Therefore, we have Greek, Syriac, Coptic, and Latin all in simultaneous use by Manichaeans and Christians at a very remote site in the Egyptian desert in the fourth century, but in the same period and later the literary culture of Alexandria is dominated by Greek.¹⁷⁵ Thus, despite

¹⁷⁰ Emmel 2007, 84.

¹⁷¹ Brock 1981; 2006a; 1983. Brock calls them ‘mirror translations’. See further below.

¹⁷² MacCoull 2007, 75–76; the usual explanation for this strange linguistic reception is that his condemnation for Tritheistic heresy in Alexandria, combined with his miaphysite theology, meant that he found his only sympathetic readership among the Syrian Orthodox. Thus, MacCoull 1987, 164: ‘It is extraordinary how many works by Egyptian thinkers are transmitted in Syriac and not in Coptic.’ However, when one of John Philoponus’ Tritheist works was being translated into Syriac, Jacob Baradaeus, miaphysite patriarch of Antioch, personally put a stop to it (Ebied, Roey, and Wickham 1981, 21). An official miaphysite Syriac condemnation of John Philoponus can be found in Chabot 1907–1933, 1.160–161 (Syriac); 2.111–112 (Latin trans.). On Philoponus in this context, see also MacCoull 1995; 2005; and Scholten 1996. For the Arabic reception of Philoponus, closely related to what survives in Syriac, see Gannagé 1989. For the history of the Tritheistic schism in the miaphysite church, see Davis 2004, 108–112.

¹⁷³ Emmel 2007, 89. How the abundant Manichaean and Gnostic literature surviving in Coptic (much of it translated from Greek) relates to the origins of the Coptic writing system is still unclear.

¹⁷⁴ Criboire 2007, 58.

¹⁷⁵ It has been argued that Kellis (an unambiguously multilingual milieu) is something of a statistical outlier, since, for instance, no Coptic text has been found at Trimithis (Amheida), another village in the Dakhleh Oasis: see Bagnall 2011, 75–94. However, one could point

the incredibly diverse linguistic landscape in late antique Egypt – which deserves more attention among historians of the Mediterranean than it has received – the main urban center of the region remains predominantly Hellenophone, in both secular and sacred literary contexts.

Kellis in the Dakhleh Oasis has yielded several hundred Coptic and Greek texts, and a few Syriac texts as well. This was a primarily Manichaean community that flourished in the fourth century. Several of the texts include both Greek and Coptic in the same document, Greek often serving as the formal opening or closing language of the letter.¹⁷⁶ One Coptic letter contains the admonition by Makarios to his son Matthaios to write the (Manichaean) Psalms ‘either in Greek or Coptic’ every day.¹⁷⁷ The Syriac finds include two Syriac–Coptic glossaries of Manichaean religious terms and phrases on the front and back of wooden tablets, as well as a few other papyri. The papyri include a letter in Greek,¹⁷⁸ which is signed in Syriac (similar letters and commercial receipts have been found at Dura Europos, dating to the third century, as noted above), and what seems to be an amulet in Syriac for a safe birth.¹⁷⁹ The Syriac fragments as well as the Syriac–Coptic glossaries were found in House 3, which has produced the majority of texts at the site. The town of Kellis was abandoned at the end of the fourth century; excavations began there in 1986.¹⁸⁰

In the Syriac–Coptic glossary of *T. Kell. Syr./Copt. 1*,¹⁸¹ there is an interesting conjunction of Syriac, Coptic, and Greek – three languages which were clearly in simultaneous use at the site during this time.¹⁸² The Syriac terms in the glossaries are technical words consistent with the language of the *Manichaean Psalm Book* and other canonical Manichaean texts, which were all originally written in a close relative of Syriac, although little remains in the original language.¹⁸³ This does not necessarily imply that a formal translation of the *Psalm Book* into Coptic was being made at Kellis; rather, it suggests that Manichaean missionaries – who had probably

to Syriac appearing (alongside Coptic and Greek) at other western oases, such as Bahriya (Kamil 1957) and Kharga (Brashear 2009).

¹⁷⁶ Gardner et al. 1999, 7; Clackson 2010, 91.

¹⁷⁷ *P. Kell. Copt. 19.13–14*, ed. in Gardner et al. 1999, 156–165.

¹⁷⁸ *P. Kell. Copt. 67*, ed. in Worp 1995, 178–179.

¹⁷⁹ *P. Kell. Syr. 1*, ed. Franzmann and Gardner in Gardner 1996–2007, 1.127–128.

¹⁸⁰ There is one further Syriac fragment, from House 1, written on a wooden board later used for practicing the Coptic syllabary; *P. Kell. Copt. 10*, ed. in Gardner et al. 1999, 126–127.

¹⁸¹ Ed. Franzmann and Gardner in Gardner 1996–2007, 1.105–111; and corr. in Gardner et al. 1999, 344–347.

¹⁸² For the evidence of Latin mentioned above, see *P. Kell. Copt. 20.24–26*, ed. Gardner et al. 1999, 166–172; see also *Historia Monachorum in Aegypto* 6.3, referencing a man trilingual in Greek, Latin, and Coptic.

¹⁸³ Lieu 2004.

come from southern Iran or northern India, across the Arabian peninsula and the Red Sea, instead of from Alexandria – were using this glossary to support a local effort at proselytizing in Coptic. The Syriac words are primary in these glossaries, a fact which is made clear by *T. Kell. Syr./Copt. 2*,¹⁸⁴ on which the Coptic words are fitted around the Syriac, which were clearly written first. The hands are varied on both of the sides, demonstrating that multiple writers contributed to the glossary.¹⁸⁵ The first glossary seems to have been an exercise book for translation of these technical terms, while the second glossary seems to be a more advanced commonplace book of Syriac quotes from Manichaean scripture with some related (though not always) Coptic translations. Both are unique objects in their own right and will require interpretation and reinterpretation as our understanding of the site improves.

To take an evocative example of the linguistic interaction, on *T. Kell. Syr./Copt. 1*, the first glossary, line 37 in the lefthand column begins with the Syriac word ‘*oumānouthā* (‘art’, ‘craft’, or ‘skill’). It is then is glossed on the left by the Coptic word **κατῆ**, which means literally ‘a turning around’, from the root verb **κτο-** ‘to turn’ (Crum 1939, 127b), but **κατῆ** often has the extended meaning of ‘guile’ or ‘trickery’ (Crum 1939, 127a–b; cf. *Keph. 30.6*, ‘[wicked] turns’). On the line immediately below **κατῆ** there is a single word in the left column written in Coptic script which appears to be the Greek word **τέχνη** (**τεχνή**). Since **τέχνη** was commonly used in Coptic – the lexicon of the Sahidic Coptic language is approximately 20% Greek-derived – it is more proper to call this an instance of Greco-Coptic – rather than Greek **τέχνη** (though the degree to which Coptic readers and writers would have consciously thought of these words as Greek-derived is a point of debate in Coptic studies).

The translator of the Syriac has thus inserted the Greco-Coptic equivalent, **τεχνή**, of the Syriac word ‘*oumānouthā* underneath the official or first gloss of **κατῆ** in the text, which in neither its meaning ‘turn’ nor in its extended meaning ‘guile’ is the proper translation of the Syriac on the right. Therefore, it seems that the translator is saying to his reader (presumably his teacher) something like the following: “*oumānouthā* can be translated as **κατῆ** but I mean it only in the sense of **τέχνη** [which it rarely has], not in the more normal sense of guile”. Perhaps this author did not know a more precise word for ‘art’ in Coptic, such as the common word **ειοπε** (Crum 1939, 81a). It is also possible – the most logical scenario – that this was a correction by the teacher, or added for clarification by a second scribe, even though the writing hands of **κατῆ** and **τεχνή** appear to be the same.

What is the meaning of this Greco-Coptic gloss on a Syriac-to-Coptic translation exercise? Well, what it clearly does not mean is that there was a dominant Greek milieu to which these other languages were subordinate. The exchange is obviously between Syriac and Coptic. This is made even more clear by *T. Kell. Syr./Copt. 2*, which

¹⁸⁴ Ed. Franzmann and Gardner in Gardner 1996–2007, 1.112–126; and corr. in Gardner et al. 1999, 348–357.

¹⁸⁵ Franzmann 2005, 116.

includes longer phrases that seem to be taken directly from a Syriac book. However, this example does suggest that Greek was a language of cultural currency which could be invoked when a translation from Syriac to Coptic was somewhat tenuous or needed further specification.

One of the recent editors of these glossaries, Majella Franzmann, has re-emphasized in a follow-up article (specifically on the Syriac–Coptic bilingual texts) that the Syriac terms were certainly written down first, and then the exercise was carried out by a Coptic speaker who knew little Syriac. For her, this explains the gaps on the Coptic side and certain errors in translation and, in any case, (she says) there is little evidence of complete competence in both languages, particularly in glossary 1.¹⁸⁶ And she presses the point further: if there were an oral Greek intermediary (which she had previously argued for in the edition) then he or she did not understand the languages (particularly the Syriac) well enough for his or her Greek to mean much in the cases of error.¹⁸⁷

Without going more deeply into the details of her argument, I would simply suggest that it seems to me that Franzmann is here overstating the case, perhaps with the goal of expunging Greek from this intellectual exchange. Even though it is true that ‘Greek was not the intermediate language’ in any formal sense,¹⁸⁸ Greek was certainly a part of the contemporary, immediate cultural context of these objects. Numerous Greek papyri have been found on the site, even in the same house, and one with Greek in one column and Syriac in the other.¹⁸⁹ Likewise, numerous Coptic papyri have been found in the same location, as have the few other pieces of Syriac I mentioned above. As an example of this cultural currency, a Greek letter with a Syriac signature is addressed to a Theognostos, who is asked to send a ten-page notebook to an Ision, who has become a Ἑλληνιστής, ‘a user of Greek’ as translated by the editors.¹⁹⁰ There is no reason to imagine away Greek any more than there would be to deny that the main translation work in the glossary was direct from Syriac to Coptic.¹⁹¹ All three languages coexisted on this site, and I would argue that this example from the Syriac–Coptic glossaries is a signal that all three were interacting and were not mutually exclusive at Manichaean Kellis in the fourth century.

For Greco-Coptic interaction among Christians, we have the invaluable cache of documents belonging to Dioscorus of Aphrodito (c.525–c.585). Dioscorus had himself been educated in Alexandria (possibly by John Philoponus) and lived in the

¹⁸⁶ Franzmann 2005.

¹⁸⁷ Franzmann 2005, 118.

¹⁸⁸ Franzmann 2005, 119.

¹⁸⁹ *P. Kell. Syr./Gr. 1*, ed. Franzmann, Gardner, and Worp in Gardner 1996–2007, 1.129–131; though it is unclear whether the two columns are related.

¹⁹⁰ *P. Kell. Gr. 67.20*, ed. in Worp 1995, 178–179; see also Clackson 2010, 90.

¹⁹¹ Clackson 2010, 90.

Hellenophile (though natively Coptic) Antaëopolite province (or nome), halfway between the more famous Hermopolite and Panopolite nomes along the Upper Nile.¹⁹² As one part of his bureaucratic work he visited Constantinople in 551, seeking to achieve an official command for the Duke of the Thebaid in Antinoë (the Roman provincial governor) to enforce their right to local tax collection (*autopragia*) in Aphrodito.¹⁹³ He wrote his own classicizing Greek poetry while also commenting upon, editing, and ultimately preserving certain classical texts which would not have otherwise survived.¹⁹⁴ Like many Greek poets of his day Dioscorus was particularly influenced by the aforementioned Nonnus of Panopolis.¹⁹⁵ He also wrote verse encomia of saints in Greek and was very familiar with biblical and liturgical language.¹⁹⁶ In his scribal work he illustrates the principle of ‘double intervention’, simultaneously correcting and annotating the works he is copying.¹⁹⁷ So, in both his original writing and in his textual criticism, we see at work the quintessential late antique man of Greek letters: Dioscorus gives us a unique vision of just how Greek literature was written and preserved in Late Antiquity.

However, in addition to all of his traffic in Greek letters (for both literary and bureaucratic purposes), Dioscorus was also fluent in Coptic, as is evidenced by the documentary-epistolographic corpus found among his papers, and equally by his Coptic scribal hand for writing Greek.¹⁹⁸ Coptic vocalization and syntax also seems to have deeply affected the meter of Dioscorus’ Greek poetry.¹⁹⁹ It has been posited that he was well acquainted with the Coptic translations of Cyril of Alexandria’s works, as well as the large body of native Coptic discourses written by Shenoute

¹⁹² See MacCoull 1987 and, generally, 1988. See also MacCoull 2009 and Torallas Tovar 2010 on the larger context for Dioscorus’ multilingualism.

¹⁹³ MacCoull 1988, 10–11.

¹⁹⁴ See Agosti 2008 for a recent appreciation of Dioscorus’ poetry. See also the edition and translation (with commentary) of his poems in MacCoull 1988, Chapter 3. A list of the classical literary works preserved by Dioscorus can be found at Fournet 2003, 64. See also the detailed study of Dioscorus’ editing and commenting work in Fournet 1999. As Fournet mentions, it is notable that Menander is among Dioscorus’ library, given the distinct late antique and Byzantine preference for Aristophanes, to the near absolute destruction of Menander’s corpus (2003, 67).

¹⁹⁵ See MacCoull 1988, Chapter 3, for numerous reminiscences of Nonnus, particularly from the *Paraphrase of John*; see also Schwendner 2008; and Kuehn 1995, 50 and *passim*.

¹⁹⁶ MacCoull 1988, 18–19. See MacCoull 1986a for an isopsephistic poem on the obscure Egyptian St Senas; isopsephism is where the numerical value of all the letters in each line of a poem add up to the same number (in this case 5680).

¹⁹⁷ Fournet 2003, 64.

¹⁹⁸ MacCoull 1981. The ‘Hand A’ of his uncial Greek is simply his Coptic documentary hand, a conjunction often exhibited on the recto and verso of the same papyrus. On Greek and Coptic hands blending together in bilingual environments, see Bagnall 2011, 91–94.

¹⁹⁹ MacCoull 1988, 62–63.

of Atrię.²⁰⁰ He also shows awareness of Coptic gnostic concepts, which is perhaps not surprising given the proximity of Aphrodito to the pagan center of Panopolis, and near also to the location of the discovery of the Nag Hammadi codices.²⁰¹ The extensive Greek-Coptic glossary he prepared (c.570) is comprised mainly of Homeric language for the world around him – names for fish in the Nile, for example – glossed by their contemporary Coptic equivalents.²⁰² A perfect example of the Greco-Coptic, yet fully Roman, world Dioscorus inhabited, this evocative glossary was found written on the back of a draft letter in formal Greek to the Duke of the Thebaid.

However, this evocation of a fully bilingual Greek-Coptic world in Dioscorus' surviving cache of documents is not always cited toward the same conclusions. A recent reevaluation of the bilingual situation in Egypt by Arietta Papaconstantinou argues that Dioscorus was more intentional about his choice of Coptic than is usually assumed.²⁰³ Given that he grew up around Coptic speakers and was probably a native speaker himself – his grandfather, after all, was named Psimanobet – it is commonly thought that Coptic was his substrate language and that, by extension (as already noted), Coptic ways of thinking (if we can call them such) emerge also in his Greek writing. By contrast, Papaconstantinou has emphasized the fundamental Greek cast of his work, pointing out that neither Dioscorus nor any bilingual poet of his day wrote poetry in Coptic.²⁰⁴ The importance of this argument is that Dioscorus' extensive Coptic archive might be seen as distinctly counter-cultural if it is acknowledged that Greek was in the ascendancy for educated Egyptians in the sixth-century Roman world.²⁰⁵ In a larger sense this debate has the potential to destabilize all of these terms: no longer are 'Greek', 'Coptic', or (especially) 'Egyptian' certain categories in late antique Egypt. And, if we add the persistent

²⁰⁰ MacCoull 1988, 152–153. Shenoute himself, though the quintessential Coptic author, is seen today as having been able to read and write Greek with facility (Emmel 2007, 91; cf. Alan Cameron 2007, 40–41). See also the letter from Patriarch Dioscorus of Alexandria to Shenoute in which he asks him to translate his Greek letter into Coptic and distribute to the bishops of Panopolis, Hermopolis, and Rhinocoroura (Thompson 1922, 374).

²⁰¹ MacCoull 1988, 154.

²⁰² Ed. Bell and Thompson 1925; see also MacCoull 1986b. Compare the fifth-century Latin–Greek–Coptic glossary (with the Latin in Greek characters) newly re-edited by Kramer 2010. For the role of interpreters and translators in late antique Egypt, see Mairs 2010.

²⁰³ Papaconstantinou 2008. A similar conclusion is reached about Coptic epistolography generally at Bagnall 2011, 94. See also Richter 2006; 2008; 2010; and MacCoull 2013.

²⁰⁴ Papaconstantinou 2008, 79. She also disagrees with MacCoull 1988 on the question of how much 'classical' Coptic literature (gnostic texts, Shenoute, etc.) Dioscorus shows evidence of knowing. On native Coptic poetry (all religious/hymnographic), see the excellent article by K.H. Kuhn in the *Copt. Enc.*, s.v. 'Poetry'.

²⁰⁵ The question of how and where Dioscorus acquired his literary/documentary Coptic becomes a more important question in this new interpretation: see Cribiore 1999.

Latinisms that recur throughout the Greek and Coptic texts of Dioscorus' archive, the question of what 'Roman' means, linguistically at least, is fluid as well.²⁰⁶

This debate is not very different from the debate over the 'essentially unhellened' Ephrem in the Syriac world which was mentioned above. What is the cultural valence of choosing to write in these languages? There seem to be similarities between the way Greek is appropriated (or dismissed) at certain points in Late Antiquity among Syriac speakers and among Coptic speakers. But there are serious differences as well. Furthermore, there is a stark difference in the types of evidence available to assess such valence. No other eastern Christian language besides Greek possesses today anything close to the published papyrological archive that Coptic has.²⁰⁷ On the other hand, the first formal Coptic inscriptions do not appear until very late, into the seventh century,²⁰⁸ whereas Syriac inscriptions appear in the first to second centuries CE, well before any written text. So, the textual records of Coptic and Syriac on their own terms, in addition to their interactions with Greek, are very different from one another and different from other eastern Christian languages as well.²⁰⁹ Because of the richness of the material record in papyri, there is a real danger of Egyptian exceptionalism in this eastern Christian narrative. That is not to say Egyptian evidence should not be used analogically with other eastern Christian linguistic interactions, but the individual contours of Coptic's literary history, particularly in its unique relation to Greek in the numerous surviving bilingual texts, should be taken into account. In fact, perhaps the most unique aspect of Coptic-Greek interaction is that, by the late seventh century, following the Arab conquests, Greek had disappeared almost entirely from the Coptic world. Although usually linked to an Arabic statute from 685 directing the replacement of Greek and Coptic with Arabic for state records, this disappearance is nevertheless unexpectedly early given the entrenched nature of Greek in previous centuries in Egypt. It is also unlike the fate of Greek in the milieux of Syriac, Georgian, and other eastern Christian languages, where bilingualism continued into the ninth century and beyond (as we will see).²¹⁰

²⁰⁶ MacCoull 1988, Index, s.v. 'Latinisms, in Dioscorus'; with Adams 2003, 527–641.

²⁰⁷ See Bagnall 2011, 75–94, for a discussion of the numbers and relative significance of these two papyrological corpora. The substantial corpus of Christian Arabic papyri remains largely unpublished. See also Richter 2009.

²⁰⁸ Papaconstantinou 2008, 83. However, there are early seventh-century Coptic funerary epitaphs: Tudor 2011, 139, 337.

²⁰⁹ For comparison, different from both Coptic and Syriac are the Armenian inscriptions, which appear nearly simultaneously with the first texts, early in the history of that language (fifth century): see Greenwood 2004.

²¹⁰ See MacCoull 1990 for a Greek paschal encyclical from the miaphysite patriarch of Alexandria in the early eighth century; she also points out in passing (40) that Greek documentary papyri appear in Egypt as late as the 780s. MacCoull 1999 contains an edition

But the picture is more complicated, as the Kellis documents have already shown. Dichotomies between Greek/Syriac and Greek/Coptic do not hold: the examples of Greek–Syriac–Coptic interaction (or some combination of the three) abound in Egypt even after the seventh century when Greek was generally subsumed by Coptic. Two of the most famous Christian scholars of Syriac in late antique Egypt were a pair of Syrian Orthodox monks, Thomas of Harkel and Paul of Tella, who produced a revised Syriac translation of the New and Old Testaments (respectively) in the years around 615, starting possibly in 613 and ending around 619, the year of the Persian sack of Alexandria.²¹¹ In terms of translation technique, this version – the Harklean New Testament and Paul of Tella’s *Syro-Hexapla* (the first full translation of the Septuagint into Syriac) – constituted the most literal Bible translation from Greek into Syriac ever made.²¹² Every nuance of the Greek source text is seemingly communicated in this version, including syntax and word-order, to the detriment of a natural Syriac style.²¹³

Expelled from their sees in 599 by Dometianus, Chalcedonian bishop of Melitene and nephew of the emperor Maurice, Thomas of Harkel (miaphysite bishop of Mabbug/Hierapolis; 570–640) and Paul, miaphysite bishop of Tella, made their translations at the Enaton monastery complex in Lower Egypt, which takes its name from being at the ninth mile-marker to the west of Alexandria, along the road to Cyrene.²¹⁴ The monastery was later called in Arabic Dayr al-Zujaj (the ‘Monastery of Glass’) or Dayr al-Zajjaj (the ‘Monastery of the Glass Maker’).²¹⁵ The Enaton was actually a complex of numerous monasteries and served as a pit-stop for travelers going to and from Alexandria and the monastic settlements further to the west, such as Kellia, the Wadi Natrun desert, and Scetis.²¹⁶ The complex was located on the *taenia* or coastal strip between the Sea and Lake Mareotis, and thus had access to both lake trade and ocean trade.²¹⁷ There was a common *hegoumenos* at the Enaton, as well as a common *oikonomos* later on, even though the monasteries were

of two Paschal troparia in Greek with Coptic translations from a manuscript dating to the tenth to twelfth century. One might also cite the amazing fourteenth-century *Kacmarcik Codex* (1345), a bilingual Greek–Arabic edition of the Coptic Mass: see Macomber 1975; 1977 (Greek text); Samir 1978 (Arabic text). The manuscript can be viewed online here: <http://cdm.csbsju.edu/cdm/ref/collection/hmmlcollect/id/5356>. See Papaconstantinou 2007 and 2012 for discussions of why Coptic ultimately failed in the face of Arabic.

²¹¹ Dating: Hatch 1937; Vööbus 1971, 36–40.

²¹² Brock 1981; GEDSH, 180–181.

²¹³ Brock 1982; 1983.

²¹⁴ Honigmann 1953; Abel 1911.

²¹⁵ *Copt.Enc.*, 954.

²¹⁶ GEDSH, 144–145.

²¹⁷ *Copt.Enc.*, 954–955.

apparently full of foreign-born monks speaking different languages.²¹⁸ According to the *History of the Patriarchs*, there were 600 of these monasteries at the Enaton in the late sixth and early seventh centuries.²¹⁹ Each monastery, or more properly each *koinobion*, was named after its abbot: the *koinobion* of Apa Gaius, the *koinobion* of Abba Salamah, etc. Early on, in the fifth century, it was known as a haven for miaphysites like Peter the Iberian, fleeing Chalcedonian persecution in Palestine. A generation later, Severus of Antioch fled there from Constantinople in 518 upon the accession of Justin I and was eventually buried there after his death in 538. In subsequent periods of persecution by the Chalcedonian patriarch of Alexandria, Coptic miaphysite patriarchs such as Peter IV and Damian sought refuge in the Enaton.²²⁰ However, despite this strong association with the miaphysites, even Chalcedonians seem to have been welcomed at different times: Justinian I issued a dogmatic letter to the monks of Enaton congratulating them on returning to the imperial fold under the Chalcedonian bishop Zoilos;²²¹ also, the Chalcedonian author John Moschus, who never mentions miaphysites at the Enaton (!) despite its prominent place in his *Spiritual Meadow* – he names seventeen monastic communities in Egypt – notes that a Chalcedonian Abba Theodorus from Palestine, nicknamed ‘the Philosopher’, sojourned at the Enaton.²²² Indeed, there seems to have been a collection of Chalcedonian monks with similar epithets, such as ‘the Great Solomon’ and ‘Stephen the Sophist’, who formed their own schools at the Enaton, perhaps in imitation of the philosophical schools of nearby Alexandria.²²³ All in all, the heady mix of creeds and philosophies at Alexandria in the sixth century seems also to be reflected in the demographics of the Enaton at the same time and later.

The statement is often made that the integration of Syriac monks into the Egyptian milieu was easy because they shared the same negative view of Chalcedon. We know multiple Syrian Orthodox writers from the period who spent time at the Enaton, including John of Ephesus and Zacharias of Mytilene (“Zacharias Rhetor”), biographer of Severus. But this easy familiarity was only formally ratified in 616 when a union between the Coptic and Syrian Orthodox was negotiated. At those negotiations, the Syrian Orthodox contingent was led not by the Patriarch Athanasius I Gamolo of Antioch but by his *synkellos*, Thomas of Harkel.²²⁴ Later, sometime around 630, a personal audience with Heraclius was arranged when

²¹⁸ *Life of Longinus* 764–767, ed. Basset.

²¹⁹ *Copt. Enc.*, 955; *History of the Patriarchs* 472, ed. Evetts 1904–1914.

²²⁰ *GEDSH*, 144–145; Honigmann 1951, 143–145, 238.

²²¹ *Copt. Enc.*, 957.

²²² Moschos, 171; trans. Wortley 1992, 139–141.

²²³ See Wolska-Conus 1989.

²²⁴ *GEDSH* 418; Barhebraeus, *HE* 1.50 = 1.269, ed. Abbeloos and Lamy 1872–1877; Michael the Great, *Chronicle* 10.26 = 4.392–399, ed. Chabot 1899; *History of the Patriarchs* 480–483, ed. Evetts 1904–1914.

twelve Syrian Orthodox bishops, including both Patriarch Athanasius I Gamolo of Antioch and Thomas of Harkel (now restored to the bishopric of Mabbug), met at Mabbug to discuss union with the imperial Chalcedonian (monenergist or monothelite) church. These discussions were ultimately a failure, of course, and Thomas died around 640.²²⁵ Along with Alexandria, the monastery of the Enaton was sacked by the Persians in 619 but seems to have recovered fairly rapidly, having received certain benefits from the Arabs following their conquest of Egypt in 641.²²⁶ In the seventh century, a number of Syrian Orthodox scholars came from the school-monastery of Qenneshre in Mesopotamia seeking ‘Greek wisdom’ in Alexandria and at the Enaton: these included Isidore of Qenneshre, Mara of Amid, and especially the famous Syriac polymath Jacob of Edessa. In the high medieval period, though the evidence is scant, the Enaton seems to have been primarily under the control of the Syrian Orthodox and dedicated to the memory of Severus. However, a number of Coptic patriarchs from this period also came from the Enaton, and there was a custom from the late eighth century to the fifteenth century that the Coptic Patriarch, if he did not originate from the Enaton, would make an official visit there.²²⁷

Most important from a textual point of view is that we have a number of manuscripts of the translations by Thomas of Harkel and Paul of Tella with colophons that mention the Enaton and the circumstances of their work. The earliest is an eighth-century manuscript in the British Library, which contains the book of First Kings and which provides a dating for the *Syro-Hexapla* Old Testament, saying that this book was translated from Greek in February/March 616 in the ‘Monastery of the Antonines at the Enaton near Alexandria’.²²⁸ Other manuscripts of the *Syro-Hexapla* include one in Paris (*Par. syr. 27.2*), which names the patron of the translation as the Patriarch Athanasius I Gamolo himself, and one in the Ambrosiana in Milan (*Mil.C. 313*, folio 151b), which dates the translation of Daniel and the Minor Prophets to January 617.²²⁹ Both Patriarch Athanasius I Gamolo and Thomas of Harkel had studied Greek at the monastery of Qenneshre on the banks of the Euphrates, and

²²⁵ GEDSH 418; Bar Hebraeus, *HE* 1.50 = 1.271–273, ed. Abbeloos and Lamy 1872–1877; Michael the Great, *Chronicle* 11.3 = 4.409–410; for a summary of Thomas’ career, see Bar Hebraeus, *HE* 1.50 = 1.267, ed. Abbeloos and Lamy 1872–1877; Michael the Great, *Chronicle* 10.25 = 4.391, ed. Chabot. On the date of this meeting, see Winkelmann 2001, 62–63.

²²⁶ *Copt.Enc.*, 957.

²²⁷ *Copt.Enc.*, 958. The longest and most important of the anti-Tritheist works in the *Dossier* of Peter of Callinicum is his letter (in Syriac) to Isidore and Theodore, ‘administrators’ (*sā‘ourē*) of the monastery of the Antonines at the Enaton, ed. Ebeid, Roey, and Wickham 1981, 94–102; trans. Ebeid, Roey, and Wickham 1981, 65–70.

²²⁸ BL Add. 14.437, fol. 122a = Wright 1870–1872, 1.33–34.

²²⁹ Vööbus 1971, 37–38.

Athanasius wrote a *Life of Severus* which has survived in Coptic fragments and whole in Ethiopic.²³⁰

How do we connect the work at the Enaton with Coptic? We have no reason to doubt that Coptic monks were present at the Enaton: the church history of Egypt in this period tells us that was the case, from novices to patriarchs. In terms of direct linguistic interaction, which is hard to trace, of course, I would offer one example from the Enaton in an earlier period. There is a Syriac manuscript from the sixth century in the British Library containing a note by Severus of Antioch that the colophon claims had been found in a volume belonging to ‘the Monastery of the Dalmatians at the Enaton near Alexandria’.²³¹ Most important for my purposes is the presence of transliterations in a Copto-Greek hand of several Syriac words from this colophon, including proper nouns that are (amazingly) originally Greek but appear here in Syriac and in the Greco-Coptic transliteration (e.g., ΔΛΜΤΙΑ and εντον). It is even more amazing to consider that this Syriac manuscript was copied only twenty-five years after Severus’ death, which means that in that short amount of time, the note Severus wrote in Greek was translated into Syriac and incorporated into this miscellaneous collection of Syriac texts (perhaps all on site at the Enaton itself); and the scribe, who apparently knew Syriac and Coptic (or Syriac and Greek, or Syriac, Coptic, and Greek, or, at the very least, Syriac and Greco-Coptic letters) wrote his colophon and in the process transliterated these proper names for readers who might be unfamiliar with their appearance in Syriac. This is a phenomenon comparable to – though not exactly the same as – what happened in Kellis two to three centuries earlier: a Syriac original, in order to be understood more clearly in an Egyptian context, required the addition of Greco-Coptic words to complete the meaning. But here the scribe providing the Coptic glosses was not primarily a Coptic translator but a Syriac copyist within an Egyptian world. And, again, Greek was the foundation and background medium of the exchange.

The Coptic Orthodox Monastery of Deir al-Surian (*Sancta Maria Deipara*) lies in the region of Wadi Natrun (ancient Scetis) between Alexandria and Cairo (Fustat), to the west of the Nile valley. This medieval monastery, acquired by the Copts in 1636, continues to flourish today and is a site many visit in order to see the beautiful wall paintings that have been uncovered and restored.²³² During the early medieval period, however, this monastery was Syrian Orthodox, and we happen to know a

²³⁰ Vööbus 1971, 42 n.7. The question of the role of Ethiopic, and indeed Christian Arabic, as cultural vehicles must be left to the side here. On Ethiopic, see the collection of articles in Bausi 2012, esp. in Part Four ‘The “Second Christianization” and the “Syriac Influences”’; see also Beaucamp, Briquel Chatonnet, and Robin 2010.

²³¹ Fol. 48b in *BL Add. 14.541*, fols 39–49 = Wright 1870–1872, 2.585–586.

²³² Innemée and Van Rompay 1998.

good deal about it.²³³ According to three surviving documents of sale – admittedly much later in date²³⁴ – the monastery was purchased by a merchant from Tagrit (in Iraq) named Maruthā son of Habbib, a resident in Cairo sometime in the late eighth century or early ninth century. These documents do not give an exact date but all three say it was bought for 12,000 gold dinars.²³⁵ Also, numerous Syriac inscriptions have been uncovered along with the wall paintings, testifying to its Syriac ecclesiastical history from the ninth century through the medieval period. One recently uncovered inscription names a Marutha and Papa, father and son, as Tagritan benefactors to the monastery, perhaps confirming the later evidence of Marutha's involvement with the purchase of the monastery.²³⁶ Two early icons have been uncovered as well, including an image of the Virgin *Galaktotrophousa* from the seventh century and an unidentified military saint from around 700.²³⁷ Both of these include accompanying Greek inscriptions identifying the subject: Ή ΑΓΙΑ (MAPIA), and the one for the military saint being destroyed except for -ΙΟΣ. Other paintings include images of Philip and the Eunuch (Acts 8:26–40) and Andrew in the country of the *kynokephales anthropophagoi* (*Apocryphal Acts of Andrew and Matthias*).²³⁸ In addition, multiple inscriptions in both Syriac and Coptic have been uncovered on the walls, dated variously from around 800 to the twelfth century. One of the earliest is an exceptional inscription written vertically (top to bottom) in a mirrored style which simply names 'Saint Quryaqos, patriarch of Antioch' (fl. 793–817). This is one of the earliest datable pieces of evidence showing Syriac-speaking monks were present in the monastery.²³⁹

The first known abbot of this monastery is Abba Bar 'Idai (in place around 850), who passed on his authority to two brothers Matthew and Abraham, themselves coming from Tagrit.²⁴⁰ These brothers, along with another brother named Jacob, seem previously to have been responsible for the rebuilding of this monastery in 816 to 818,²⁴¹ perhaps coincident with the visit of the Syrian Orthodox Patriarch Dionysios to Egypt in that year.²⁴² It certainly seems that there was a great surge

²³³ Innemée and Van Rompay 1998; 2000; 2002; Innemée 1998; 1999; 2001; 2011; Van Rompay 1999; Sobczynski 1999; El-Souriany and Van Rompay 2001; Van Rompay and Schmidt 2001a; 2001b; Martin 2002; 2003.

²³⁴ Innemée and Van Rompay 1998, 191–193.

²³⁵ Innemée and Van Rompay 1998, 191; Wright 1887, 14–15; Blanchard 1995, 16; Evelyn White 1926–1933, Plate VI; cf. Wright 1870–1872, 3.xvi–xxv.

²³⁶ Innemée and Van Rompay 1998, sec. C.3 and 184.

²³⁷ Innemée and Van Rompay 1998, sec. B.3 and B.4, with Fig. 3 and 4.

²³⁸ See Innemée and Van Rompay 1998, 172–174, with Fig. 5.

²³⁹ Innemée and Van Rompay 1998, 177, with Fig. 7.

²⁴⁰ Evelyn White 1926–1933, 2.310–311.

²⁴¹ Innemée and Van Rompay 1998, sec. C.5.1.

²⁴² Evelyn White 1926–1933, 2.301.

of activity at the monastery in the ninth century, which continued into the tenth and beyond. The monastery's direct connection with Tagrit is still apparent as late as the eleventh century: in fact, several colophons dating from the ninth through the eleventh centuries register the gifts of books to the Monastery of the Syrians from Tagritans. One of these manuscripts, dating to 823, was not written in the Syriac homeland at all, but in the Thebaid of Egypt, by a monk from Dara in upper Mesopotamia.²⁴³

In terms of language and literature, the monastery is famous among Syriac scholars because it preserved many of the unique copies of major Syriac authors like Ephrem. These manuscripts for the most part ended up in the Vatican Library and British Library in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries respectively, having been purchased directly from the monastery, which had little use for the texts, being solely Coptic Orthodox by that point. However, there are still Syriac manuscripts there, and Sebastian Brock and Lucas Van Rompay have recently published the first catalogue of this collection, both the fragments and the manuscripts.²⁴⁴ Among other texts, the discoveries include 118 folios in a seventh- or eighth-century manuscript of a previously unknown *memrā* 'On Faith', possibly by the fourth-century Mar Aba, a student of Ephrem's.²⁴⁵ In the manuscripts from Deir al-Surian, both held at the monastery and those now in European libraries, there is thus an unparalleled wealth of Syriac material.

If it were not for this single monastery in Coptic Egypt, Syriacists would have only a fraction of what we have today, and many of its definitive authors would be nearly unknown. The only complete manuscripts of Ephrem's *madrāshe*, Aphrahat's *Demonstrations*,²⁴⁶ Bardaisan, John of Ephesus, and the Syriac version of Gregory of Nazianzus' iambic poems come from this monastery.²⁴⁷ The bulk of the corpora of Philoxenos of Mabbug and John of Dara comes from this library, as does the only extant manuscript of the Syriac *Zuqnin Chronicle*, also called the *Chronicle of Pseudo-Dionysius of Tel Mahre* (776), now divided between the Vatican and British Libraries.²⁴⁸ This is to say nothing of the rare early manuscripts that come from the monastery, such as BL Add. 12,150, a manuscript containing translations of Eusebius' *Theophany* and *Martyrs of Palestine* and Titus of Bostra's *Against the Manichaeans* (all lost in the original Greek except for fragments). This is the earliest dated manuscript from all of eastern Christianity (indeed, from the western world), produced at Edessa

²⁴³ Innemée and Van Rompay 1998, 183.

²⁴⁴ Brock and Van Rompay 2014.

²⁴⁵ DS Ms. Syr. 20, ff.76–194: Brock and Van Rompay 2014, 105–110.

²⁴⁶ BL Add. 17.182; in two copies, one from the sixth century and one from 474, only 130 years after their composition: Blanchard 1995, 14.

²⁴⁷ Brock 2004, 18–20; Blanchard 1995, 23.

²⁴⁸ Blanchard 1995, 24; Brock 1979–1980, 10–13; Vat. Syr. 162 and BL Add. 14.665, fols 1–7.

in 411.²⁴⁹ In fact, three dated manuscripts from the fifth century have survived, including the manuscript just mentioned, the earlier Aphrahat manuscript (474), and an incomplete copy of the Syriac version of Eusebius' *Ecclesiastical History* dated to 462.²⁵⁰ Moreover, before the Curetonian Old Syriac Gospels were discovered among the manuscripts bought from Deir al-Surian by the British Library in the nineteenth century, it was not known that a full translation of the Gospels (apart from Tatian's *Diatessaron*) was made prior to the Peshitta²⁵¹ – to this was added, of course, the Sinai manuscript of the Old Syriac discovered by Agnes Smith Lewis in the early twentieth century. To sum up this litany in Sebastian Brock's words:

A total of 136 dated Syriac manuscripts whose dates fall prior to A.D. 1000 are at present known to me; of these, all but 17 come from either Deir al-Surian or from the only other monastery in (modern) Egypt which possesses Syriac manuscripts, namely St Catherine's Monastery, Sinai.²⁵²

The Syriac manuscripts kept at this monastery during the medieval period stem largely from the industrious work of its abbot in the early tenth century, Mūshē (or Moses) of Nisibis (fl. 906–943). His story, known from a collection of colophons and some inscriptions at the monastery, has been rehearsed by multiple scholars with varying emphases.²⁵³ Briefly put, we know Mūshē was at the monastery by 906/7 from a later colophon, and he is named as the head of the monastery in an inscription dating to 913/14.²⁵⁴ From another inscription, we know he made further structural improvements in 926/27.²⁵⁵ On a visit to Baghdad in 927, while waiting for his petition for tax-exemption to be accepted by the Caliph (it was), he was able to obtain 250 Syriac manuscripts, which he brought back after five years to Deir al-Surian in 932.²⁵⁶ This story is related with more or less detail by 60 manuscripts in western libraries that have been identified as belonging to Mūshē's haul of 250.²⁵⁷ As an example, take the following colophon from *BL Add. 14.445*:

To the honor and glory and magnificence of this Syrian Orthodox monastery of the Mother of God in the Desert of Sketis, Mūshē known as 'of Nisibis', an insignificant sinner and abbot, strove to acquire this book, together with 250 others (many of which he himself bought, while others

²⁴⁹ Leroy 1974, 459. Hatch 1946, 52 and Plate 1.

²⁵⁰ Blanchard 1995, 15, 23; Evelyn White 1926–1933, 2.439–458.

²⁵¹ Blanchard 1995, 13–14.

²⁵² Brock 2004, 18.

²⁵³ Brock 2004; Blanchard 1995; Leroy 1974; Innemée and Van Rompay 1998, 186–189; and Evelyn White 1926–1933, 2.337–338.

²⁵⁴ Which says he erected the *haikal* screen in the church: Blanchard 1995, 17.

²⁵⁵ Blanchard 1995, 18.

²⁵⁶ Evelyn White 1926–1933, 2.338.

²⁵⁷ Evelyn White 1926–1933, 2.443–445.

were given to him as a present), when he went to Baghdad on behalf of this holy Desert and the monks dwelling in it. May God, for whose glory, and for the benefit of those who read these books, grant forgiveness to him and to his departed ones, and to everyone who has shared with them. By the living word of God no one is permitted to cause harm to any of them in any way; nor to appropriate them to himself. Nor should anyone delete this commemorative note, or make any erasure or cut anything out – or order anyone else to do so; nor may they be given away from the monastery. If anyone dares to do so, let him realize that he is under an anathema. These books arrived with the above-mentioned abbot Mūshē in the year 1243 of the Greeks [= 932 CE].²⁵⁸

As here, many colophons state how and where he acquired the manuscripts: purchases were made in Baghdad and Resha'ina (in northern Iraq); gifts came from donors in Edessa, Ḥaran, and Tagrit. Mūshē obviously traveled around searching for the best manuscripts. He focused not on deluxe manuscripts but those of relative antiquity and preciousness: of the sixty that we are sure come from his collecting activities, one is from the fifth century, ten are from the sixth century, and three are from the seventh century.²⁵⁹ Among those he brought back are three works by Athanasius of Alexandria preserved in full only in Syriac (the *Festal Letters*, the *Letter to Virgins*, both surviving partially in Greek and Coptic, and his *Treatise on Virginity*, surviving partially in Armenian) and 146 homilies on the Gospel of Luke by Cyril of Alexandria in Syriac translation – of the latter, only three homilies and some fragments survive in Greek.²⁶⁰ In the words of one scholar, Mūshē was demonstrably ‘careful and knowledgeable’ and returned to Deir al-Surian with ‘a collection of Christian resources for teaching and study’.²⁶¹

Among the physical evidence for the Coptic environment of the Monastery of the Syrians, there are a number of manuscripts that were at one time or other acquired by that monastery which show Syriac, Coptic, and Greek interaction

²⁵⁸ BL Add. 14.445 = Wright 1870–1872, 1.26–27 (not including a transcription of the colophon). The translation quoted here comes from Brock 2004, 16. Compare the colophon of BL Add. 14.531 (= Wright 1870–1872, 2.740), where Mūshē has erased part of an earlier scribal admonition about changing the manuscript in order to make room for his own colophon(!), describing the donation of the volume by a priest named John from Baghdad. In this colophon Mūshē adds the detail that he sought to obtain remission of the poll-tax levied against the monastery in 927 CE.

²⁵⁹ Blanchard 1995, 20–21.

²⁶⁰ Blanchard 1995, 22–23. For the *Festal Letters*, see Cureton 1848.

²⁶¹ Blanchard 1995, 21–22. It seems the Syrian monks in Egypt were especially bookish: the Syrian Orthodox Patriarch Dionysios had made a derogatory comment about the Coptic monasteries’ lack of learning during his visit of a hundred years earlier (Evelyn White 1926–1933, 2.301). Several of the surviving sixty notes describing Mūshē’s success in procuring the manuscripts may be in his own hand: BO 1.576; 2.118.

on the site in various periods. The most abundant of these, though perhaps the least surprising, is the use of Greek or Coptic letters for numerals, including page numbers, throughout the Syriac manuscripts. Often the Coptic numbers are later additions and some incorrectly translate the Syriac originals,²⁶² but, regardless, they are nearly omnipresent in the Syriac manuscripts from Egypt. This attests to the fact that Coptic was probably the primary language of many monks in the monastery, or at least they had equal fluency in it. At the very least we might say that the technical habits of copyists at the Monastery of the Syrians coincide with what we see in Coptic scriptoria elsewhere in late antique Egypt.²⁶³

More interesting for my purposes are the Coptic subscriptions which testify to translation, reading, and scribal work by specific Coptic-speaking scribes in a Syriac context, often revolving around a work originally written in Greek. Thus *BL Add. 17.114* is a sixth- or seventh-century manuscript written in what Wright calls ‘a small, Nestorian Estrangela’ containing the Peshitta Gospels.²⁶⁴ On folio 33b, $\alpha\nu\kappa$ $\alpha\kappa\eta\nu\pi$ (‘I [am] Afnir’) is written in Coptic, which could be referring either to the scribe or, more likely, a monk that was reading the manuscript who knew Syriac but whose primary language was Coptic.²⁶⁵

More substantial is a manuscript dated to 873/4, containing a selection of Psalms, Old Testament songs, a few liturgical hymns by Ephrem, a sermon attributed to John Chrysostom, and the Creed of Severus.²⁶⁶ In the margins at different points in the first twenty-nine folios there are offered various readings derived from the Septuagint, as well as scholia (in Syriac translation) drawn from Athanasius and Hesychius of Jerusalem. The colophon says the manuscript was originally written in Edessa by a Cosmas, and there is added to this a partially erased memorandum of the gift of the manuscript to the Monastery of the Syrians. Somewhat strangely, there is also, on folio 6a, a subscription in Coptic, presumably by a reader of the manuscript in the library at the Monastery of the Syrians, which says:

‘Remember [in prayer] the sinner who wrote [this], that He [God] may have compassion and forgive him. Amen.’

A tenth- or eleventh-century service book contains a collection of Syriac anaphoras and various orders of service. There are two names written in the margins in Syriac at two different points – ‘Zacchaeus the sinner’ (fol. 90a) and ‘Barsauma the sinner’

²⁶² E.g. Wright 1870–1872, 1.26–27 = *BL Add. 14.443*, fols 99–144.

²⁶³ See MacCoull 1997. On the amazingly rich evidence of book culture in late antique Egypt, see Kotsifou 2007; Maravela-Solbakk 2008; and MacCoull forthcoming.

²⁶⁴ Wright 1870–1872, 1.45–46.

²⁶⁵ The use of the personal pronoun (first or second person) without a copulative verb is often used in Coptic to introduce a proper noun in extraposition: e.g. *Philemon* 19, $\alpha\nu\kappa$ $\pi\alpha\gamma\lambda\omega\kappa$ $\alpha\ddot{\iota}\text{--}c\gamma\alpha\ddot{\iota}$ $\bar{n}\text{--}\tau\alpha\chi\iota\chi$, ‘I, Paul, have written this with my hand.’ See Layton 2011, 65.

²⁶⁶ *BL Add. 17.109* = Wright 1870–1872, 1.120–122.

(fol. 174b) – presumably readers of the manuscript, but there is also the name in Coptic of Simeon (ϲѹμεѡນ, fol. 158b), followed by that of Apa Bishoi (ѧѡѡ ՚ѹѡѡ), also in Coptic, then the Coptic phrase, φ† ՚ѹѧ-՚ѹѧ-՚ѹ (‘God be merciful to him’).²⁶⁷

A sixth-century parchment codex in Estrangela script contains a number of works by Evagrius in Syriac translation.²⁶⁸ On the opening folio (fol. 5a) there is a note in Syriac stating that ‘I bound this [book] with clear/purified glue, I John the sinner, in appearance an old man and son of Makarios, head of the Monastery of the Syrians in the desert of Sketis. All that I ask (cry out to) Him may He incline towards it and fulfill it. I wrote these (words) in the year (A.Gr.) 1205 [834]’. Underneath this subscription, there is another subscription, this time in Coptic, written by the same John: ‘I pray the God of my fathers, remember my littleness, I John the Little, son of ... Macarius ... May Christ Jesus our Lord forgive me all my sins, because I have labored at this holy book of Abba Evagrius.’ Why did John feel the need to subscribe twice in two languages? It is possible they were added at different times, but they appear to be contemporary with one another.

A Syriac palimpsest of the tenth century, containing a large selection of Syriac translations of Greek patristic tracts, plus some monastic writings, including Evagrius, has as its under-text a seventh-century Coptic manuscript, which was once clearly a deluxe edition of the Old Testament in Sahidic and still retains remnants of ornamental letters and decoration, principally birds, underneath the Syriac.²⁶⁹

There is a famous manuscript commonly referred to as *Codex Nitriensis* which is a single Syriac palimpsest containing as its upper-text the first half of the second book of a treatise of Severus of Antioch against John the Grammarian. The Syriac hand is of the ninth century.²⁷⁰ However, it contains two separate Greek manuscripts underneath: first, the Syriac is written over parts of Books 12–24 of the *Iliad*, in a Greek majuscule hand dating to the fifth or sixth century.²⁷¹ These fragments were first edited by William Cureton in 1855 and constitute one of the earliest surviving manuscripts of Homer.²⁷² The second Greek under-text includes part of the Gospel of Luke in Greek as well as a portion of the *Elements* of Euclid, both in a majuscule script of the fifth or sixth century.²⁷³ According to the subscriptions in the colophon, this manuscript (that is, the Syriac treatise of Severus) was originally copied for Daniel, *periodeutes* of Amid, by a recluse named Simeon from the monastery of Mar Simeon of Qartmin (in Tur Abdin, Turkey). It is then noted in a different hand that

²⁶⁷ For the abbreviation φ† for πνοῦτε (i.e. φνοῦ†) in Bohairic, see Crum 1939, 230b.

²⁶⁸ BL Add. 14.635, fols 5–15 = Wright 1870–1872, 2.449–450.

²⁶⁹ BL Add. 17.183 = Wright 1870–1872, 2.822–823.

²⁷⁰ See Wright 1870–1872, 2.549–550.

²⁷¹ BL Add. 17.210 = Wright 1870–1872, 2.548.

²⁷² Cureton 1855.

²⁷³ BL Add. 17.211 = Wright 1870–1872, 2.548–549.

Daniel was later bishop of Edessa and that he (again) had acquired the manuscript while *periodeutes* of Amid. (He was probably bishop of Edessa sometime between 768 and 825.) In a third hand is a note that upon his death Daniel bequeathed the manuscript to the monastery of Mar Silas of Sarug. Somehow – it is not explained in the colophon – this palimpsest subsequently found its way to the Monastery of the Syrians, from which it was bought by Cureton for the British Library in 1847. While not stated explicitly in the colophon, it has been posited by Cureton and others that this was one of the very manuscripts Mūshē of Nisibis brought back from Baghdad, and it is possible that we can add Sarug (near to Haran and Edessa) as one of the places Mūshē visited before returning to Baghdad and from there to his home monastery in the Egyptian desert.

Finally, we might add to this list of Syriac manuscripts mainly from the British Library a manuscript that has survived on site at the Monastery of the Syrians. This manuscript contains a variety of saints' Lives. It is specifically noted that some of these Lives were 'translated from the Egyptian language into Syriac' by John, the abbot of the monastery. This colophon is dated to 903/4, that is, immediately prior to the arrival of Mūshē of Nisibis.²⁷⁴ This brief glimpse of the linguistic and literary culture of the Monastery, perhaps more than anything, is evocative of a mixture of traditions and languages. Moreover, from an ecclesiastical point of view, it might be noted that the most ancient colophons from the Monastery often name the Patriarchs of Antioch and Alexandria together. This is also true of a new Syriac inscription from the site, dating to 818/19, and to the tenth-century Syriac inscriptions on the doors of the church, where the Patriarch of Alexandria is named first in two places.²⁷⁵ These latter inscriptions date to the period when Mūshē was restoring the monastery, a time usually considered to be the most 'Syrian'-leaning in its long history.

The Egyptian desert has long been a part of the thought world of the Greek and Syriac churches, as both a place of refuge and a place of exile.²⁷⁶ In the fifth century, following the Council of Ephesus, Nestorius was famously exiled to the Egyptian desert, spending the years 435–450/1 wandering around Upper Egypt, and dying in Sa' id, nearby to his contemporary Shenoute's famous White Monastery at Atrię. His last work, the *Bazaar of Heracleides*, surviving only in Syriac, suggests that he lived (or almost lived) to see the Council of Chalcedon confirm his dyophysite theology.²⁷⁷ The fifth- or sixth-century Coptic *Life of Zenobius*, which is associated

²⁷⁴ See Kamil n.d., XXIII.

²⁷⁵ Innemée and Van Rompay 1998, 193.

²⁷⁶ Fiey 1972–1973, 317–318.

²⁷⁷ Ed. Bedjan 1910; trans. Driver and Hodgson 1925.

with the White Monastery, attests to the distaste that the Orthodox still held for Nestorius in the generation or two after Shenoute.²⁷⁸

Nevertheless, this hostility did not stop the Church of the East from claiming a heritage in Egypt, although it was based not on Nestorius, but on another figure, one that was truly Egyptian. The legendary founder of Syriac monasticism, Mar Awgen, was said to be a disciple of Pachomius and to have led twenty-eight (or seventy) disciples of his own up to Mesopotamia in the fourth century. Later, East Syrian monastic leaders like Abraham of Kashkar (c.500–588), the great renovator of East Syrian monasticism, identified themselves with Awgen directly,²⁷⁹ and seem to have considered a visit to Scetis as important as a pilgrimage to Jerusalem or Sinai (which they also made). Numerous Church of the East monks left Persia in the late sixth and early seventh centuries to visit Egypt, before returning to found their own monasteries back home. These stories appear regularly throughout the ninth-century East Syrian ecclesiastical histories of Thomas of Marga and Isho‘dnah of Basra.²⁸⁰ Furthermore, alongside the legendary Awgen, historical figures of Egyptian monasticism were directly appropriated. There is a Syriac translation of the *Life of Shenoute*, which may predate the Arabic version and was likely translated directly from Coptic.²⁸¹ Likewise, there is a Syriac translation of the Letter 1 of St Antony (no Syriac versions of the other letters exist).²⁸² These letters may originally have been written in Greek or Coptic but, regardless, they were available in all three languages, and Latin, by the sixth century.²⁸³

Even the memory of Ephrem was transformed through interaction with Coptic Egypt. According to the sixth-century Syriac *Life*, while still a young man Ephrem went with his bishop, Jacob of Nisibis, to the Council of Nicaea (which, of course, is not attested historically at all).²⁸⁴ Then, in line with the historical narrative, Ephrem left Nisibis for Edessa upon Jovian’s accession.²⁸⁵ Later, after hearing about the good

²⁷⁸ Ed. Till 1935–1936. See also Shenoute’s sermon, ‘I Am Amazed’, which includes a number of criticisms of Nestorius’ theology, probably written during Nestorius’ own lifetime, or at least deriving from a contemporary source (e.g., Theophilus of Alexandria): ed. and trans. Cristea 2011.

²⁷⁹ Jullien 2008.

²⁸⁰ There are many examples of this in Isho‘dnah of Basra’s *Liber Castitatis* (ed. and Fr. trans. Chabot 1896; also ed. Bedjan 1901, 439–517): I count ten total: 4, 23, 34, 36, 37, 50, 67 (68 Bedjan), 72 (73 Bedjan), 121 (122 Bedjan), 127 (128 Bedjan). See Johnson forthcoming.

²⁸¹ Nau 1900.

²⁸² Rubenson 1995, 16–17.

²⁸³ Rubenson 1995, 15–34.

²⁸⁴ Perhaps in imitation of Athanasius of Alexandria who accompanied his bishop Alexander and who, like Ephrem, later became a staunch anti-Arian polemicist: *Life of Ephrem* 5, ed. Amar 2011, 1.14–15 (trans. 2.16–17).

²⁸⁵ *Life of Ephrem* 9, ed. Amar 2011, 1.22–23 (trans. 2.25–26). In the year 363, following Julian’s disastrous eastern campaign, the new emperor Jovian ceded the northern

reputation of Basil of Caesarea, Ephrem decided to go meet him, taking along one of his disciples as an interpreter, since he was unable to speak Greek. After hiring a ship they set off but were diverted by a storm and ended up in Egypt instead.²⁸⁶ There Ephrem met Apa Bishoi, and the two were miraculously able to speak to one another:

Although holy Bishoi did not know Syriac, and Ephrem did not know Coptic, God, who accompanies those who worship Him, and loves them and hears them, granted both of them a gift so that (Bishoi was able) to speak Syriac, and Ephrem (was able to speak) Coptic.²⁸⁷

Thereafter Ephrem stayed in the Egyptian desert for eight years, writing 'books and commentaries of every kind in Coptic'.²⁸⁸ Eventually he left for Cappadocian Caesarea, where he arrived on Epiphany. Ephrem and Basil finally met, celebrated communion together, and began to converse. Once again, the linguistic difficulties were solved miraculously:

The gift of the Greek language was granted to Mar Ephrem through the prayers of the true shepherd Basil, as (Ephrem) had asked of him in all humility. And likewise, the grace of the gift of speaking Syriac was granted to Mar Basil through the prayers of Mar Ephrem.²⁸⁹

Basil then ordained a reluctant Ephrem to the diaconate, and the deacon Ephrem returned to Edessa.²⁹⁰

Despite the fact that Ephrem's authentic corpus betrays no hint of him having traveled outside a (primarily) Syriac-speaking milieu,²⁹¹ this sixth-century writer took pains to emphasize Ephrem's experience of the broader eastern monastic world. He recognized the linguistic barriers to such ecumenical dialogue, but his desire to connect Ephrem to the founders of eastern monasticism overwhelmed any pretense to verisimilitude. The reinvention of Ephrem as a trilingual, well-traveled monk allowed the Syriac churches (even as early as the sixth century)

Mesopotamian city of Nisibis to the Persians. The Syriac poet Ephrem was one of the Roman subjects forced to abandon the city and move westward, inside the redrawn border of the Roman empire, to the city of Edessa. On the capitulation of Nisibis and subsequent exodus, see Ammianus Marcellinus 25.9; J.W. Drijvers 2011 provides a comparison of Ammianus' account with that of the (very different) Syriac *Julian Romance*.

²⁸⁶ See Amar 2011, 2.44 n.1.

²⁸⁷ Trans. Amar 2011, 2.48–49 (ed. 1.44–45). See generally Blanchard 2003.

²⁸⁸ *Life of Ephrem* 25, ed. Amar 2011, 1.50 (trans. 2.54).

²⁸⁹ Trans. Amar 2011, 2.65 (ed. 1.60).

²⁹⁰ *Life of Ephrem* 34, ed. Amar 2011, 1.80–82 (trans. 2.87–89).

²⁹¹ Though he was firmly in a Roman imperial context in both Nisibis and Edessa: Russell 2005; Wood 2012; against Millar 1998 and 2006b.

to claim the entire Greco-Coptic tradition of monasticism for themselves and to associate their own culture hero with the culture heroes of the Coptic and Greek literary traditions.²⁹²

However polluting they may have considered Nestorius' sojourn in Egypt, Coptic writers clearly felt very differently about this legendary Greco-Syro-Coptic Ephrem, and they accepted the legends instantiated in the Syriac *Life* which enhanced his relationship to Egypt. Sometime between the late eleventh and early fourteenth centuries, Ephrem's relics were transferred to the monastery of Deir al-Surian in Egypt.²⁹³ The tradition that Ephrem had met Apa Bishoi was a strong one, and the local legend arose at the Monastery of the Syrians that Ephrem had left his staff there, which subsequently grew into a great tamarind tree, and is present outside the monastery even today.²⁹⁴ Moreover, Coptic versions of 'Ephrem Graecus' were preserved at Shenoute's White Monastery, bound together with a Coptic translation of Evagrius' *Principles of the Monastic Life* in the same manuscript.²⁹⁵

It often used to be asserted that some Gnostic texts surviving in Coptic, particularly those dealing with the figure of the Apostle Thomas, actually depend on a Syriac original, or at least a Syriac translation from Greek. This is because Walter Bauer (among others) placed them in a Syrian cultural milieu of more extreme asceticism. In recent years Copticists have shown that it is more likely that those texts were translated directly from the Greek into Coptic, though when the translations were made and, especially, when the originals were written is anybody's guess. But cartonnage papyri from the bindings of the Nag Hammadi books show them to have been buried in the fourth century CE, concurrent with the Manichaean finds in Kellis. So a trilingual milieu for fourth-century Gnostic literary activity in Egypt should not be ruled out.

What is interesting about the attempted 'Syriacization' of early Coptic writings – particularly heretical and dualistic ones – among twentieth-century scholars is that it reverses the trends within Syriac Christianity itself particularly from the fifth to seventh centuries: on one hand, Syriac translations were often more Hellenizing in their language, as seen by the Harklean translation made at the Enaton, but Syrian

²⁹² There is even, as mentioned above, a Syriac translation of the *Life of Shenoute*, which may predate the Arabic version and was likely translated direct from Coptic (Nau 1900). Ephrem was, according to most scholars, not bilingual, and certainly not a Coptic speaker – though his level of engagement with Hellenistic philosophy is debated (Possekel 1999). Further, he was only ever a deacon in the church, not a monk *per se*, despite the *Life*'s firm insistence on his monastic and eremitic pedigree.

²⁹³ Blanchard 1993, 41.

²⁹⁴ Blanchard 1993, 42.

²⁹⁵ On Ephrem in Coptic, see Proverbio 1997 and Lucchesi 1998. On the Evagrius fragment in Coptic (*Rerum monachalium rationes* = CPG 2441), transmitted under the name of 'Ephrem the Syrian', see Lucchesi 1999 and Suciu 2011, 12–13.

monastic culture (and the monastic literature that went along with it) tended to ‘Egyptianize’, culminating in the creation of a legendary Egyptian founder for Syrian monasticism, Mar Awgen, and Syriac translations of innumerable Egyptian monastic works, both Greek and Coptic: from Palladius’ *Lausiac History* (translated multiple times) to the Syriac version of the *Life of Shenoute*. In the words of Sarah Clackson, ‘It is not possible to create a convenient dichotomy between ‘Greeks’ and ‘Copts’ in Late Antiquity, by which time there is evidence for high levels of social integration and acculturation’.²⁹⁶ I would extend this conclusion even to the Syriac writers of Late Antiquity, especially in and around the Egyptian world. The dichotomies that some historians have set up between the language of power and the oral languages on the margins of the late Roman and early Byzantine empire do not hold up on close inspection. The complicated process of trying to explain the Greek-Syriac-Coptic trilingual interaction in Late Antiquity from disparate types of sources from different periods and locales speaks directly to the marvelous complexity of intellectual and religious life on the ground in late antique Egypt.

VII. THE SECOND GOLDEN AGE: PALESTINE, SINAI, AND SYRIA, SEVENTH TO TWELFTH CENTURIES

The monasteries close to Jerusalem, especially the Great Lavra established by Mar Sabas (439–532), have received dedicated treatments from both an archaeological and historical point of view.²⁹⁷ Their tradition begins relatively early in the fourth century, as evidenced by the career of the prolific Epiphanius of Salamis (bishop of Cyprus from 367), who established a monastery near Eleutheropolis having previously been a student of the putative founder of Palestinian monasticism, St Hilarion.²⁹⁸ The literary remains of the Sabas monasteries (established 483 and after), in particular, largely take the form of episodic hagiographical biography in Greek, by Cyril of Scythopolis in the sixth century – in his *Life of St Euthymius* and *Life of St Sabas* (both finished by 556) – and by John Moschus in the early seventh – in his *Spiritual Meadow*, dedicated to Sophronius.²⁹⁹ Cyril of Scythopolis

²⁹⁶ Clackson 2004, 22.

²⁹⁷ Patrich 1995 and the excellent collection of papers in Patrich 2001. For the built monastic environment of the whole Judean/Palestinian region in this period, see Schick 1995 and Hirschfeld 1992.

²⁹⁸ Patrich 1995, 6. Both the Chalcedonian and the miaphysite monastic traditions claimed the mantle of Hilarion.

²⁹⁹ On Cyril of Scythopolis generally, see Hombergen 2001 and Flusin 1983; on Moschos, see Chadwick 1974; Louth 1998; Pachomios 2003; and now Booth 2013a. Related texts contemporary with these are the ascetic writings of the sixth-century author Dorotheus of Gaza and the advice literature of the *Letters of Barsanuphius and John*. However, these have

(c.525–c.558) was a monk at St Euthymius, the New Lavra, and the Great Lavra. John Moschus began at the monastery of St Theodosius (c. 565–590), then later lived with Sophronius in the New Lavra until they left Palestine in 604.³⁰⁰ The Greek works of Cyril of Scythopolis and John Moschus do not betray much in the way of connections with Syriac or CPA. And, even though some surviving CPA texts date from the fifth and sixth centuries, there does not seem to have been (at this time) any major literary school in this language among the monasteries near Jerusalem, even though evidence for the language continues into the thirteenth century.³⁰¹ Therefore, in line with this Greek focus, the monastic literature of the Great Lavra and its associated monasteries appears staunchly Chalcedonian, following in the footsteps of Sabas himself, who had been asked by Justinian to disseminate his anti-miaphysite decisions in Palestine.³⁰²

According to Cyril of Scythopolis, Mar Sabas himself had encouraged the Armenians to pray matins in their own chapel in Armenian, before coming to the communal Eucharist in Greek, and at the monastery of St Theodosius, the Eucharist service itself was chanted daily in five languages: Greek, Syriac, Georgian, Armenian, and ‘the language of the Bessoi’.³⁰³ The interesting question, however, is how do eastern Christian languages such as Syriac and Armenian get reincorporated into these Chalcedonian communities, producing literary schools in the languages, following what seems at this stage to be a strict separation along linguistic and theological lines between Chalcedonians (Greek) and non-Chalcedonians (other languages) in the sixth century (coincident with Justinian’s purge of non-Chalcedonian monasteries)? This resurgence of interaction between Greek and other eastern Christian languages occurs in the midst of and (especially) following the Persian and Arab conquests of the Holy Land in the 620s and 630s. Greek does not by any means disappear, but it makes room at the Palestinian monasteries for writers and translators in the other languages, and it becomes a lingua franca between them, especially the Chalcedonian melkites.

The Great Lavra of St Sabas and the other Holy Land monasteries only grew in importance during this period, while also strengthening their ties with other Chalcedonian monastic centers, such as the monastery of St Catherine at Sinai, or the melkite community at Edessa. As much as or more than in the previous period,

recently been read as crypto-miaphysite and are thus, perhaps, to be read more in the vein of Peter the Iberian and Severus of Antioch at Maiuma a generation or two earlier.

³⁰⁰ Cyril: ed. Schwartz 1939; trans. Price 1991. Moschus: ed. PG 87.2851–3116; trans. Wortley 1992.

³⁰¹ Fragments of the Syriac version of the *Life of Mar Saba* by Cyril of Scythopolis, discovered among the New Finds at Sinai, come from a ninth-century palimpsest with CPA underneath: see further below.

³⁰² Patrich 1995, 45.

³⁰³ Blake 1965, 373–374. See note 52 above.

the links between Sinai, Jerusalem, and Edessa proved fruitful for monastic and scholarly exchange, and because of these links the role of Greek among eastern Christians maintained its prominence well into the ninth century.

Sophronios (c.560–638), a disciple of John Moschos (d. 619 or 634) and famously the dedicatee of the latter's *Spiritual Meadow*, which he was responsible for compiling, was originally from Damascus but spent a great deal of time among the monks of the Great Lavra of St Sabas and other monasteries of Palestine.³⁰⁴ He traveled with Moschos to Sinai, where they stayed for ten years, as well as to Egypt, including Alexandria, and to Rome. The dominant theological controversy in the seventh century was Monenergism-Monotheilism, which affected the Palestinian and Syrian monasteries directly and which seems to have been even the dominant Chalcedonian position in these regions for the majority of the century.³⁰⁵ Sophronios was involved in the early period of this controversy, during its transitional phase from language of 'one activity' (Monenergism) to that of 'one will' (Monotheilism).³⁰⁶ Due partly to Sophronios' intervention, a prohibition on 'activity' discourse was issued by the Patriarch Sergios I of Constantinople in 633, in the so-called *Psephos* ('Resolution'). However, this shortly led to a new attempt at compromise enacted by the emperor Heraclius himself in 638, in the *Ekthesis* ('Statement'). This compromise (supposedly an olive branch to the miaphysites) discarded activity language in favor of a 'one will' (*monothelema*) formula. In between the *Psephos* and the *Ekthesis*, Pope Honorius at Rome had written to Sergios at Constantinople to affirm his support for the phrase 'one will (*una voluntas*) of our Lord Jesus Christ'.³⁰⁷

Sophronios' theological wrangling with the imperial position was only one front on which he fought. Having been elected Patriarch of Jerusalem in 634, only four years later in 638 he was responsible for negotiating the surrender of Jerusalem to the conquering Arab armies. He died shortly after this event. His career and theological writing were thus deeply involved with both imperial affairs in Constantinople and the local monastic communities of Palestine, Sinai, Egypt, and elsewhere. In terms of language, this larger role of Greek as a unifying language among the Chalcedonian monastic world in the East is clearly on display

³⁰⁴ See Vailhé 1901–1902; 1902–1903; von Schönborn 1972; and now Booth 2013a; 2013b. On the broad corpus of Greek writing in early seventh-century Palestine which can contextualize the *Spiritual Meadow*, see Flusin 1992.

³⁰⁵ See Levy-Rubin 2001; Brandes 1998. On Monenergism-Monotheilism as a 'regional orthodoxy' in Syria and Palestine to the end of the seventh century, see Tannous forthcoming.

³⁰⁶ A summary of the controversy can be found in Allen and Neil 2002, 8–21. For close analyses of the theological language, see Hovorun 2008; Lange 2012; and especially Winkelmann 1987 and 2001, a dossier on which all recent studies depend.

³⁰⁷ These official documents, as well as Sophronios' *Synodical Letter* from 634 condemning Monenergism, are collected in Allen 2009.

in Sophronios' ecclesiastical and theological career, though he is often cited only for his surviving poetry, his *Miracles of Cyrus and John*, or for his association with Moschos.³⁰⁸ As a complement, it could be argued that, in terms of his engagement with ecclesiastical issues throughout the eastern Mediterranean, he is just as important as perpetuator of the tradition, continuing for the next two centuries, in which Greek functioned as an agent for knitting together diaspora communities of the eastern Mediterranean (not only Chalcedonian), while also facilitating the mutual intelligibility of numerous theological positions.

Maximos the Confessor (580–662) exemplifies this process even more than Sophronios, since, following his departure from the East in the early 630s, he ended up visiting numerous diaspora communities in the West (e.g., North Africa, Sicily, Rome), before his trial and exile back in the East.³⁰⁹ Not insignificantly, a hostile Maronite *Life of Maximos* (in Syriac) describes his visit to an expatriate 'Nestorian' monastery in North Africa, which welcomed him warmly despite his Chalcedonian beliefs.³¹⁰ In the *Life* he and these monks discourse on theology, eventually coming to the conclusion that they believe the same Christological doctrines.³¹¹ While it is not stated explicitly in the *Life*, one presumes their medium of communication was Greek.³¹² In any case, the vignette is striking: a leading Greek theologian from Palestine seeks broader support for his dyothelite theology (condemned by a monothelite Greek clergy) and discourses in Greek with exiled East Syrian monks while sojourning in the Byzantine exarchate of North Africa, before moving on to join Greek communities in Sicily and Rome. This story – which all took place in the throes of the Arab conquests of Palestine and North Africa (630s–640s) – shows that the language of Greek, and the intellectual/theological framework it created, acted dynamically throughout the early Byzantine world and that the boundaries of theological controversy – geographical as well as political or metaphorical – were

³⁰⁸ Anacreontics: ed. Gigante 1957; epigrams: Alan Cameron 1983; *Miracles of Cyrus and John*: ed. Fernández Marcos 1975, with Duffy 1984 and 1987, and trans. Gascou 2006.

³⁰⁹ For the later period of his career, including his trial, mutilation, and exile, see the documents collected in Allen and Neil 2002; and 1999. See also, generally, Louth 1996.

³¹⁰ Brock 1973. The title of the Maronite *Life* is 'The narrative concerning the wicked Maximos of Palestine, who blasphemed against his creator and his tongue was cut out.'

³¹¹ Brock 1973, 317: 'They set off and arrived at a monastery at the upper tip of Africa, called in Latin Hippo Diarhytus (PN' ZRTWS) [i.e., Bizerta], where some students from Nisibis were living. The abbot of the monastery was Esha'ya, and there was his son, Isho'. There were about eighty-seven monks there, and they were Nestorians; and when they found that Maximos and Anastasios [his disciple] agreed in their teaching with Nestorios their master, they received them and agreed with their doctrine [i.e., dyothelitism].'

³¹² Though it is feasible that Syriac and CPA were mutually intelligible in the seventh century, assuming Maximos could speak the latter. Still, the image of a Syriac–CPA dialogue taking place in Byzantine North Africa, when at least one of the two parties was a native Greek speaker, seems like a stretch.

never as rigid as they may seem at a distance.³¹³ Further, according to the Maronite *Life*, the East Syrian monks who received Maximos at Bizerta, in the face of Arab armies in North Africa in 647–648, left their monastery and fled to Rome (tracing Maximos' movements two years prior), where Pope Martin provided a monastery for them called *cellae novae*, otherwise known as St Sabas on the Aventine.³¹⁴ In 649 Martin called the Lateran Synod. Largely scripted by Greek monks, including Maximos, this synod condemned the imperial position of Monothelitism.³¹⁵ It seems likely that both Greek- and Syriac-speaking dyothelite Chalcedonians were freely mixing in Rome at St Sabas on the Aventine and elsewhere.³¹⁶ It has also been suggested that a 'Leontius' from *cellae novae* who was present at the Council of Constantinople III (680–681), which formally condemned Monothelitism in the East, was in fact the hagiographer Leontius of St Sabas, author of the Greek *Life of Gregory of Agrigento*.³¹⁷

Furthermore, as a final testimony to the legacy of eastern monks in the West, one could point to the (relatively unknown) monastery of St John Prodromos on the small island of Pantelleria, off the southwestern coast of Sicily. The *typikon* for this monastery was written by a John, the founder, who was in turn succeeded by a Basil (for whom a canon exists attached to the *typikon*): both of these monks were later commemorated as saints.³¹⁸ This island was initially a waypoint for North African

³¹³ It has long been observed that Syrian Orthodox and East Syrian monks shared books across these theological boundaries, but the same scholarly equanimity has not often been demonstrated for the early Byzantine Greek world.

³¹⁴ Brock 1973, 318–319. For further testimonia to this monastery, see Sansterre 1980, 1.23–29. See also McCormick 1998.

³¹⁵ See Riedinger 1985 and Price 2014. This Council produced a huge *florilegium* of scriptural and patristic sources: Alexakis 1996, 18. Martin, Maximus, and others were subsequently convicted of treason in Constantinople: see Allen and Neil 2002, 22–26. On the reception of the Lateran Synod in later memory, see Neil 2006.

³¹⁶ The absence in the Syriac *Life* of any mention of the Greek Chalcedonian monks fleeing Palestine to Rome at the same time as these 'Nestorians' from North Africa has been explained as a monothelite/Maronite attempt to discredit Maximos as a crypto-Nestorian: Sansterre 1980, 1.28. In Sansterre's analysis, the absence of any dyothelite Chalcedonian monks at Rome in this hostile text proves beyond a doubt that they were present at this time and were interacting with the 'Nestorians' from North Africa. He concludes that the monastery was founded at Rome between 647 and 653; if prior to 649, it would not have been founded by Martin, *pace* the Syriac *Life*.

³¹⁷ Brock 1973, 328–329. *Life of Gregory of Agrigento*: ed. and trans. Berger 1995. See also Brock's important conclusion that the Council of Constantinople III was not fully representative of Chalcedonian opinion on Monothelitism, which was in fact the dominant position among Palestinian monks until the 720s (Brock 1973, 345). On this point, see now Tannous forthcoming.

³¹⁸ Thomas and Hero 2000: 1.59–66.

Christians in the seventh century fleeing the Arab conquests – perhaps like our monks from Bizerta – but later, once the monastery was founded, it also housed monks from the East (eighth to ninth centuries) who were being persecuted or exiled by Iconoclasts.³¹⁹ The monastery does not seem to have lasted much past 850 but is an important (if somewhat mysterious) example of the western movement of Greek-speaking monks from the seventh to ninth centuries.

A younger contemporary of Maximos, Anastasios of Sinai (635–c.700) demonstrates how consistent this internal eastern Christian tradition of Greek was during the seventh and eighth centuries. Most notably, the trend toward collection and encyclopedism is apparent in both of their corpora, as is the totalizing approach to combatting heresy, not unlike Epiphanius of Salamis in the fourth century, though much more sophisticated in argumentation.³²⁰ According to tradition a monk at the Chalcedonian monastery of St Catherine in Sinai, Anastasios wrote a compilation called the *Hodegos* (or *Viae dux*) for dismantling contemporary heresies, principally Miaphysitism and Monothelitism; this work incorporated the author's own scholia on his book between 686 and 689, demonstrating further the quality of compilation that underlies these texts.³²¹

Anastasios, like John of Damascus, though aware of Muslim teachings, seems not to have been greatly interested in the doctrines of Islam.³²² According to tradition Anastasios was the disciple of John Klimakos (c.579–c.650), reluctant abbot of St Catherine and author of the influential *Ladder of Divine Ascent*, a highly rhetorical manual of monastic discipline.³²³ Anastasios had similar interests to Klimakos and is well known for his series of monastic anecdotes about Sinai.³²⁴ But he seems also to have written in a wide variety of genres beyond the strictly monastic.³²⁵ He is credited with works in both the *florilegium* and *erōtapokriseis* (Munitiz 2011) literary forms, which, even if not genuinely Anastasian, are contemporary texts and very much in line with the literary trends of his period.³²⁶ Likewise, the Greek *Hexaemeron*

³¹⁹ Thomas and Hero 2000: 1.59–66. On Greek poets associated with this monastery, see Odorico 1988.

³²⁰ On Maximos and late antique debate literature, see Averil Cameron 2014, Chapter 2.

³²¹ Ed. Uthemann 1981. See also Richard 1958.

³²² Hoyland 1997, 92–103; Griffith 1987.

³²³ On the title of the *Ladder of Divine Ascent*, see the discussion in Duffy 1999, where he argues the original Greek title was probably the πλάκες πνευματικαί ('spiritual tablets'), in line with the Mosaic conceit of the work (Duffy 1999, 6). See also Johnsén 2007.

³²⁴ Ed. Nau 1902a; 1902b; 1903; partial trans. Caner 2010, 172–199. See also Flusin 1991.

³²⁵ See Haldon 1992 for the argument that these various works belong to a single Anastasius.

³²⁶ On the development of the form of the *florilegium* in Christian literature from the third century on, see Chadwick 1969. In Greek in this period, the testimonia of the *florilegium* were called χρήσεις, 'sayings'. I am grateful to Jack Tannous for discussing this topic with me at length.

assigned to the name of Anastasios,³²⁷ while also spurious in terms of attribution, is nevertheless very typical of the kinds of works being written in Syriac and Armenian at the same time.³²⁸ All of these strands of the *Hexaemeron* tradition, in Greek, Syriac, and Armenian, each hark back to the *Hexaemeron* of Basil of Caesarea, demonstrating the continued value of patristic Greek in multiple languages of eastern Christianity.³²⁹ Interestingly, unlike John of Damascus, who was in later memory the Byzantine theologian *par excellence*, Anastasios of Sinai seems to have found his posthumous readership through translation in other eastern Christian languages, especially Arabic.

The prolific and influential author known to Byzantine tradition as John of Damascus (c.675–c.753/4) actually grew up with the name Mansūr ibn Sarjūn ('Mansūr, son of Sergios'; a Christian Arabic name), after his grandfather, who had negotiated the surrender of the city of Damascus to the Arabs in 635 (three years prior to Sophronios' similar negotiation for Jerusalem).³³⁰ As with Sophronios and Maximos, John did not leave any writings to posterity that are not in Greek, despite being from a Semitic background and presumably speaking some combination of Arabic, Syriac, and CPA.³³¹ He took his name John when entering an unknown monastery in Jerusalem (traditionally thought to be St Sabas); this presumably happened around 706, when the Caliph al-Walīd made Arabic the official language of the Umayyad Caliphate, replacing Greek.

In Jerusalem, John was attached to the church of the Anastasis, and it is thought that he wrote the majority of his works during this period. While the tradition that John was attached to St Sabas is not attested among the early sources for his life, the general outlook for that monastery during his lifetime can apply to his presence in Jerusalem in general: 'During this era [7–8C], as security worsened, the [Great] Lavra shrank toward its center and the number of monks decreased. But despite the deliberate attacks of the Saracens [sic], literary creativity there during this period reached its peak.'³³² In the same burgeoning tradition of systematic or encyclopedic theology represented by Anastatius of Sinai, John of Damascus wrote

³²⁷ Ed. Kuehn and Baggary 2007.

³²⁸ Takahashi 2011; Romeny 2008; Nau 1899; 1910a; 1910b; 1910c; 1910d; 1910e; 1929–1930/1931–1932. See Flusin 1996 for the argument that the Armenians were the direct inheritors of this late antique scientific tradition, especially the Alexandrian tradition. See also Greenwood 2011.

³²⁹ Thomson 1995.

³³⁰ For the career of John of Damascus, see Louth 2002, 3–14. For the Constantinopolitan misunderstanding of 'Mansūr' as a family name, see Auzépy 1994.

³³¹ John's works have been recently edited by Kotter 1969–1988. See also CPG 3.511–536; the division between genuine and spurious works in CPG is maintained by Kotter for the most part.

³³² Patrich 1995, 328–329.

a number of polemical works against heretical Christian confessions, such as the West Syrian ‘Jacobites’, the East Syrian ‘Nestorians’, the monothelites, as well as against the Manichaeans.³³³ These were collected into a volume *De haeresibus (On Heresies)*, a text that was further incorporated into a larger *summa* of his theology, called the *The Fount of Knowledge* (in Greek, the *Pēgē Gnōseōs*).³³⁴ It is clear from John’s letter to Kosmas ‘the Melode’ of Maiuma (c.675–c.752), serving as the introduction to the *Fount of Knowledge*, that he was in favor of presenting all these works together as a systematic compendium of theology.

Thus, in the midst of the increasing Arabicization and Islamicization of the Holy Land, it is significant that a writer as important for later Greek tradition as John of Damascus was thriving in the Chalcedonian community of Jerusalem, and not in Constantinople. Furthermore, it is worth noting that John’s value for the history of Byzantine literature at Constantinople (cited via Kazhdan at the beginning of this study) is matched by his significance for communities outside of Constantinople: he was fundamental for theological writing on Mt Athos from the eleventh century on, while, at the same time, he became the subject of a cult at St Sabas in Palestine, as attested by Russian pilgrims to Jerusalem.³³⁵ Moreover, the eleventh-century *Synaxarion of Constantinople* already lists John of Damascus as a saint, with a feast day of 4 December, and John Zosime’s tenth-century Georgian encyclopedia of liturgical calendars cites him under the same day, and also under 9 December.³³⁶ Therefore, the whole breadth of the eastern Christian world recognized his influence at least by the time of the Komnenian empire, and earlier than that in some quarters.

By this time his writings on icons had become fundamental for the internal Byzantine *ex post facto* interpretation of what happened in the ‘Triumph of Orthodoxy’ (843), that is, the formal end of Iconoclasm. However, it has been argued that his works on icons were motivated by the anti-iconic Muslim culture of his own day and were not primarily intended for a Constantinopolitan readership.³³⁷ This view, espoused principally by Sidney Griffith, emphasizes a certain aspect of

³³³ Kotter 1969–1988, vol. 4. It should be noted that all of these targets of his polemic were primarily Syriac speakers at the time, except for the monothelites (the Maronites), who maintained a literature across Greek, Syriac, and Arabic in the period (Nasrallah 1979, vol. 2, t.1–2). Given that he wrote these treatises in Greek, one presumes that those who commissioned these treatises, such as Metropolitan Peter II of Damascus (for the *Contra Jacobitas*), could read Greek readily. Certainly the Jacobites studied and read Greek, though one doubts whether these treatises ever even came to their direct attention. See also Tannous 2013 on the educational system at the Syrian Orthodox monastery of Qenneshre.

³³⁴ See Griffith 2006, 195–197.

³³⁵ Louth 2002, 22.

³³⁶ Delehaye 1902, 278–280; Garitte 1958, 108 (4 Dec.) and 109 (9 Dec.).

³³⁷ Griffith 2006, 191–194; and not just his writings on icons but his larger theological corpus as well.

John's famous condemnation by the Iconoclast Council of Hiereia in 754: not that he was seen in iconoclastic Constantinople as a defender of icons, but that he was 'Saracen-minded', in the words of the Council, and too involved in debate with the Muslims to be trusted.³³⁸ Furthermore, while John's name is mentioned in the *Horos* of Hiereia (collected in 843), he is not named at all (much less as the champion defender of icons) in the Second Council of Nicaea in 787, which represented the first condemnation of Iconoclasm.³³⁹ Even more to the point, in his own day John seems to have been recognized in Constantinople as an 'eastern Christian' author, whose native environment was among Jerusalem Christians, continuing the good fight against miaphysite and East Syrian Christologies, and not as concerned with either icons or Islam as is normally assumed today.³⁴⁰ To judge from his three treatises on icons, the topic of icon veneration may well have been more important to John of Damascus as means to address a number of different perceived heresies, including the Jews, instead of as a topic of systematic theological exploration in its own right.³⁴¹

This interpretation of Hiereia, and of John's locatedness generally, directly contradicts the recent biography of Andrew Louth, who claims John of Damascus was 'clearly a Byzantine churchman' with ties to the capital.³⁴² Such is the fundamental problem of interpreting Greek writers in the 'Byzantine Orient': the literary

³³⁸ Griffith 2006, 191–192. On Hiereia, see now Brubaker and Haldon 2011, 189–197. It is unclear whether representatives of the eastern Patriarchates attended this Council. 'Saracen-minded' is, of course, a term of abuse and should be understood primarily as indicative of the polemical discourse of the period. The degree to which the naming of John of Damascus during the Council reveals actual knowledge of his writings on icons (or any other works) remains debated. For the larger historical and literary context, see Auzépy 1994; 1997; 1999; 2006; 2007; and Brubaker and Haldon 2001; 2011.

³³⁹ Brubaker and Haldon 2011, 188–189. This is argued to be the case because John had implicated the emperor (assumed to be Constantine V) in one of his treatises on icons, and there was a reluctance to claim him for the iconophiles due to the dynastic claims of the reigning emperors. See also Noble 1987 and Auzépy 1994.

³⁴⁰ Brubaker and Haldon 2011, 188–189; Griffith 2006, 194–197; see also Khoury 1957–1958, revised into a single volume in Khoury 1994.

³⁴¹ For a translation of the three treatises on icons, see Louth 2003, which should be read along with the contextualizations of Averil Cameron 1991, esp. 308–309. One important point made by Averil Cameron in this regard is the fact that, to judge from the literature John quotes, the libraries in Jerusalem (perhaps St Sabas in particular if we place John there) were well stocked with classical texts: in other words, 'isolation' from Constantinople does not necessarily mean isolation from a good classical or theological library. The *Adversus Iudeos* literature of the early seventh century (along with its connections to the Arab conquest and to Byzantine apocalypticism) has been studied in detail by Dagron and Deroche 1991; see also Stroumsa 1988 for the earlier period.

³⁴² Louth 2002, 220–221 (in comparison with Theodore Abū Qurra).

historian must decide whether the immediate literary context – often non-Greek in primary language and multifarious in theological commitment – or the readership of Constantinople – almost completely Hellenocentric and Chalcedonian – was the real (or ideal) place of reception for their works. For instance, the extensive Byzantine biographical tradition of John of Damascus is relatively late (twelfth century) and seems to have been based on multiple earlier treatments in Arabic – surviving in both Arabic and Georgian – dating back to the tenth century and themselves emerging from the melkite communities of Jerusalem, of which John was himself a constituent.³⁴³ Thus, John of Damascus, in both his written corpus and later reception, presents an important paradox: a Greek writer in Jerusalem of Semitic parentage who was appropriated as foundational for medieval Constantinopolitan Greek. For John, as for Maximos, it is almost impossible to look back and not see them through Constantinopolitan eyes, but it is equally important to realize how fundamental they were for the contours of Greek thought and literature amidst eastern Christianity itself.

The survival of Greek writing after 800 in the Near East, subsequent to John of Damascus, while variously interpreted, is almost always tied to historical explanations of the resolution of the problem of Iconoclasm in the capital. The axiom has often been stated that the eighth century was a fallow time for Greek literature in Constantinople – producing strange works like the *Parastaseis Syntomoi Chronikai*³⁴⁴ – but, regardless of what was happening in the capital, this was a very fertile period for Greek in the East. Not insignificant is the fact that this approach coincides with the view that the eighth century in the East produced the last ecumenical ‘Father of the Church’, John of Damascus, famous throughout Byzantium not just for his theological writings but also for his hymnography. The eighth-century East also produced the two other influential Greek hymnographers, Kosmas ‘the Melode’ of Maiuma (c.675–752) and Andrew of Crete (c.680–740). As noted above, the eighth century also witnessed the first attested use of the term ‘melkite’ in Greek, used (at that time) to describe eastern Christians who paid allegiance to Constantinople, particularly to the Creed of Chalcedon. In the eighth century, John of Damascus, Kosmas, and Andrew – all traditionally associated with Jerusalem and the monastery of St Sabas – were therefore all three melkites (*basilikoi*), or have at least been conceived as such by the later tradition.

In the ninth century, Constantinople reaps the harvest of this eighth-century melkite flowering in the provinces.³⁴⁵ In almost every scholarly narrative of the

³⁴³ Blake 1965, 371. See further below.

³⁴⁴ Ed. and trans. Cameron and Herrin 1984. See also Berger 1988 and the new edition and translation of all of the *Patria* (of which the *Parastaseis* constitutes only one section), Berger 2013. Odorico 1990 remains very important as a literary analysis of the *Parastaseis*, connecting it with different kinds of collection-literature in early Byzantium.

³⁴⁵ Blake 1965, 368: ‘Les grands monastères étaient des foyers d’hellénisme.’

period this harvest is linked to the iconodule struggle, particularly in the second stage of Iconoclasm, from about 815 to 843. Emerging from that period – now dated perhaps back to 800 – is the so-called ‘Macedonian Renaissance’ or ‘Revival’ led by Photios and others.³⁴⁶ According to the standard account, this revival of intellectual culture in the capital was directly catalyzed by imported texts, ideas, and individual leaders from Palestine. In such narratives there is usually no attempt to continue the story of what happens to Greek in the provinces after the fire of renaissance, however one might define it, is lit in the capital. The easterners’ important role was played well, but, thereafter, the provinces disappear off-stage into denominational, ethnic, and linguistic isolation.

I would argue, by contrast, that it is important to keep the focus on Greek in the East: the continued social value of the language is evident, even where literary history may fail us. We have to look at how the language was being used, what it stood for, and what its communal roles were. It is not enough to show a causal relationship between what happens in such monasteries in the eighth century and the consequences at Constantinople. Of course, there is no way to separate absolutely what happened in Greek in the East from what happened in the capital. That would be an error in the opposite direction. Instead, Greek among eastern Christians in the ninth century was not logically or necessarily contingent on events in Constantinople, but the role of Greek continued to be a dynamic one even when there appear to be fewer Greek texts from the region that survived.

Merely by evoking a few historical problems of the period we can communicate its complexity. How independent was the Patriarch of Jerusalem in the early ninth century? When did he come under Constantinople’s jurisdiction (as is familiar from the Crusader period)? How were the Christians of the East related (independently or as part of a ‘big tent Byzantium’) to the Muslim Caliphate at Baghdad, or later at Cairo? How did Christians in the East maintain Greek knowledge and conventions (such as in liturgy) in mini-captals of their own, monasteries that had a kind of regional hegemony, or even networks among themselves, such as at St Sabas, St Catherine, Edessa, and the Black Mountain? It is not enough to call these centers ‘melkite’ and be done with the topic.³⁴⁷

The Greek-literate communities of eastern Christianity were their own worlds of intellectual and spiritual endeavor. They were constantly interacting with languages indigenous to the regions: Syrian, Georgian, CPA, Arabic, Armenian, and at various times Coptic (i.e. Sahidic and Bohairic) and Ethiopic (i.e. Ge’ez and, later, Amharic). Many works were translated from Greek into these languages by bilingual scholars. Not infrequently, the reverse was also true, that a text was translated into Greek, or even back into Greek, from one of these languages. The colophon of a

³⁴⁶ See, e.g., Treadgold 1988 and 1984. For the earlier dating, based partly on the emergence of the Byzantine minuscule script, see Wilson 1996, 63–68.

³⁴⁷ This point has been emphatically made by Galadza 2013.

Chalcedonian Syriac manuscript from Sinai, written in Edessa in 723, mentions that the cathedral at Edessa had both a Syriac and a Greek choir: that sort of on-the-ground bilingualism reveals itself only infrequently, and often in the process of copying and translation, where language and writing were fundamental tools.³⁴⁸

Take, for instance, the case of the famous *Barlaam and Joasaph* romance. This was available in a Palestinian melkite context in a (now lost) Greek version around the beginning of the ninth century (possibly translated from a Persian or Aramaic original), but then in the tenth century translated into Georgian (apparently through a lost intermediate Arabic version), then, later, translated back into Greek from the Georgian, either in Jerusalem or at the Iviron monastery on Mt Athos.³⁴⁹ Likewise, Isaac the Syrian, today considered a mainstay of Greek Orthodox mystical theology, was originally a 'Nestorian' author from the region of Qatar (Beth Qatrāyē), whose works, in the ninth century, were translated from their original Syriac by two (presumably melkite) monks of Mar Sabas, Patrikios and Abramios, into Greek, a translation which established Isaac's later, lofty reputation at Constantinople and Mt Athos.³⁵⁰

It will be helpful briefly to try to consider this topic through the interpretative grids already laid down by influential Byzantinists before attempting to revise the narrative of decline. Robert Pierpont Blake (1886–1950), Professor of History at Harvard (and a prime mover behind Dumbarton Oaks; symposiarch in 1949, a year before his death), was keenly interested in the question of the continuity of Greek in the East, particularly as background to his work on Georgian translations of hagiographical literature from both Greek and Arabic.³⁵¹ This interest manifested itself in an article of Blake's, unfinished at his death, that was edited and published by Robert W. Thomson (former director of DO) and the eminent Belgian Georgianist/ Kartvelologist Gérard Garitte (1914–1992) in 1965 in *Le Muséon*, of which Garitte was editor at the time.³⁵² Blake's main interest was in the 'dark matter' of Christian Arabic and Greek that is revealed through surviving Georgian manuscripts.³⁵³ (He was, in addition, the editor of the catalogues of Georgian manuscripts at the Jerusalem Patriarchate, Iviron, and Cambridge University).³⁵⁴ His emphasis falls on the dawn of the eighth century, which he calls a 'sudden awakening' ('un éveil soudain'), led by the 'chorus leader' ('le coryphée') John of Damascus.³⁵⁵ He dwells at length on the value and impact of the Damascene's theology and hymns.³⁵⁶ At the

³⁴⁸ Brock 1968; Thomson 1962; Moss 1936. I am grateful to Jack Tannous for this reference.

³⁴⁹ Kazhdan 1988.

³⁵⁰ Brock 2001.

³⁵¹ Wolff 1954 (obituary in *DOP*).

³⁵² Blake 1965.

³⁵³ Blake 1965, 371–372; 377. See, in addition, Samir 1976.

³⁵⁴ Blake 1924 (Jerusalem); 1932a (Iviron); 1932b (Cambridge).

³⁵⁵ Blake 1965, 369.

³⁵⁶ Blake 1965, 370–372.

other end of the century he reproduces the narrative familiar from Theophanes Confessor (fl. 814), that of the exodus from Palestine of Greek monks fleeing the persecutions of the Muslims (first in 797, then 813).³⁵⁷ Blake says that those who fled to Constantinople took with them certain works that were, consequently (almost deterministically), preserved in Greek. Those who fled elsewhere, often with an anti-imperial bias, took works that ended up in other languages.³⁵⁸ Thus, he posits that the homiletic works of John and Kosmas survive in ninth-century manuscripts because they were the personal copies of Syrian/Palestinian émigrés at Constantinople; whereas certain parts of the Jerusalem liturgy (and church calendar) show up only in the Georgian recension because they were not carried to the capital.³⁵⁹ He no more seeks the reasons behind these trajectories than he does question the exodus itself. But, regardless, his article was the first since Vailhé in 1888/89 (still useful, though strictly confined to St Sabas) to try to survey the Greek literary history of the Byzantine East into the early ninth century.

Blake's forays sparked further work on the topic. Cyril Mango published in 1991 what has become the touchstone for anyone working on the literary history of Greek in the period. His is much less deterministic a picture and, instead, draws specific conclusions about the impact of Palestinian Greek, not least on the genre of the chronicle, in Constantinople above all. George Synkellos had been a monk in Palestine, probably at St Chariton.³⁶⁰ When he died between 806 and 814 in Constantinople, having been synkellos to the Patriarch Tarasios, he deposited his chronicle into Theophanes' hands: Mango has argued that the bulk of what goes under the name Theophanes was actually written by George.³⁶¹ Thus, even the greatest historiographical achievement in ninth-century Byzantium, at the very beginning of this 'Macedonian Renaissance', has been attributed to direct Palestinian influence, even Palestinian 'ghost writing'. Of course, as soon as the concept of 'Renaissance' is invoked, especially in relation to the self-defining debate over icons in Constantinople, the focus of Byzantine scholars has gravitated to the outcomes of this catalyzation.

It is clear, regardless, that George had access to specifically Palestinian manuscripts,³⁶² and that Theophanes also had eastern sources.³⁶³ Less secure is Mango's argument that the chronicle genre itself was unknown at Constantinople until the ninth century: Eusebius' *Chronicle* may not appear prominently in Photius'

³⁵⁷ Theophanes, *Chronographia* s.a. 813.

³⁵⁸ Blake 1965, 378.

³⁵⁹ Blake 1965, 371–372.

³⁶⁰ Mango 1991, 151.

³⁶¹ Mango and Scott 1997, lii–lxiii; and Mango 1978.

³⁶² Huxley 1981.

³⁶³ Mango 1991, 153. See also Conterno 2011 (a review of Howard-Johnston 2010), where this narrative of Theophanes' source material is problematized.

Bibliotheca or the *Suda*,³⁶⁴ but that does not mean no one knew his works in the ninth and tenth centuries, nor does it mean chronicles like that of John Malalas or the *Chronicon Paschale* were equally unknown.

Mango's relentless focus on the impact of eastern Greek on Constantinople in the first two decades of the ninth century – the crucial importance of Palestine to the Constantinopolitan narrative – encourages a shift of emphasis away from Greek among authors and translators in the East: 'In the course of the 9th century the practice of Greek all but died out in Palestine and Syria'.³⁶⁵ To be sure, Mango acknowledges the important Greek handbook of grammar by Michael the Synkellos (c.760–846) – synkellos of Jerusalem under Patriarch Thomas (807–821) – which was written in Edessa during the time of Theodore Abū Qurra, bishop of Haran.³⁶⁶ Mango also acknowledges Michael's panegyric on Dionysius the Areopagite (including Maximos' *Preface*) and his anacreontic poem on the Feast of Orthodoxy, and underlines the impact of Michael in the capital after he came there in 813.³⁶⁷ However, he does not properly place Michael in the long continuity of the anacreontic tradition in the East: this poetic form extends from John of Gaza in the sixth century, to Sophronius of Jerusalem and Sophronius the iatrosophist (possibly the same person) in the seventh century, to Elias the Synkellos of Jerusalem in the eighth century, Michael the Synkellos of Jerusalem in the ninth century, and George Grammatikos, of Greco-Egyptian origin, in the late ninth century. In other words, up to around 900, anacreontic Greek poetry is strictly a Syrian–Palestinian–Egyptian phenomenon. Moreover, perhaps as the exception to prove the rule, this literary history is made clear from the only surviving manuscript of these poems, *Vat. Barb. gr. 310*, which was produced at Constantinople in the tenth century and includes a chronological table of contents.³⁶⁸ Moreover, unlike Guglielmo Cavallo, in an important article on the same subject in 1995, Mango does not acknowledge the translation work that was happening at Edessa in Michael's own day, which provides a necessary backdrop for his literary activity.

The literary-historical context for Michael includes the Maronite Theophilos of Edessa (d. 785), author of Arabic horoscopes for the Caliph, partly translated into Greek in the ninth century, as well as a *Chronicle*, surviving mostly in later Syriac chroniclers (though also in Theophanes Confessor, who presumably knew Theophilos in Greek).³⁶⁹ Theophilos was, in addition, the famed translator of

³⁶⁴ As noted by Mango 1991, 152.

³⁶⁵ Mango 1991, 151. This narrative of Palestinian 'impact' on Constantinopolitan affairs is often repeated without question: McCormick 2011, 52.

³⁶⁶ Mango 1991, 153–156. Grammar, ed. and trans. Donnet 1982.

³⁶⁷ Mango 1991, 156. Poem on Feast of Orthodoxy, ed. Nissen 1940.

³⁶⁸ Cavallo 1995, 18.

³⁶⁹ Hoyland 2011 is a reconstruction of the original text (in English translation) from various sources (Greek, Syriac, Arabic) that seem to have used Theophilos' *Chronicle*. It is a

Homer's *Iliad* into Syriac; alas, a text now lost, though known to later Syriac authors, including the rhetorician Antony of Takrit, who used examples from it in his treatise on rhetoric.³⁷⁰ One might also note the work of Theodosios of Edessa, brother of bishop Dionysius of Tel Mahre (himself one of those Syriac chroniclers who seems to have made use of Theophilos) and translator of Gregory of Nazianzus.³⁷¹ One of the colophons of Gregory in Syriac dates Theodosios' translation precisely to 802, though we know he traveled to Egypt in 824/5 with his brother, and died as late as 832.³⁷²

Marie-France Auzépy added considerable detail to Mango's picture in an article from 1994. She takes the same, very specific approach to the question of Palestinian influence in Constantinople, but with different goals and conclusions. Her primary aim is to demonstrate that the rewriting of the history of Iconoclasm was made precisely through this Palestinian influx of monks, who provided key elements in the legacy of iconodule theology in Orthodoxy, namely the assertions that the Sabaïte heritage had always been iconophile and that John of Damascus himself was a truly Byzantine iconodule progenitor. This legacy, however, required the diminution in the record of figures who may not have lined up to the reworking, and, equally, the elevation of figures who did. Stephen the Sabaïte (d. 794) was the subject of an important martyrial *Life* by Leontios of Damascus after 807.³⁷³ His *Life* is preserved in a single Greek manuscript (*Coislin* 303), copied in Palestine in the tenth century, though it appeared in both Arabic and Georgian translation almost immediately.³⁷⁴ In the same manuscript is preserved the *Martyrdom of the Twenty Sabaïte Martyrs*, referring to the sack of the monastery in 797, attributed to Stephen the Sabaïte himself, though written in the ninth century. Again, contemporary Arabic and Georgian translations survive.³⁷⁵ Neither of these Greek texts was known in Constantinople; they survived only in the East.

Liturgically speaking, however, we know through its tenth-century Georgian translation that the Jerusalem *synaxarion* included a Stephen of Sabas on the date

useful guide to the comparative traditions, but it cannot be used to establish exactly what Theophilos wrote since he is likely to have used lost sources that some or all of these texts also had access to. Conterno 2011 contends that Theophanes did not know Theophilus' *Chronicle*.

³⁷⁰ Cavallo 1995, 20; see also Van Rompay in *GEDSH*, s.v. 'Theophilus of Edessa'; and, with more detail, Watt 1986; 1993; 2007.

³⁷¹ Cavallo 1995, 20.

³⁷² Van Rompay in *GEDSH*, s.v. 'Theodosius of Edessa'.

³⁷³ See Mango 1991, 150.

³⁷⁴ Auzépy 1994, 184–185. Greek text: ed. Eustratiades 1933–1934 and Carta 1983. Arabic text: ed. and trans. Lamoreaux 1999, with Lamoreaux 1995 and Garitte 1959; Georgian fragmentary text: ed. and trans. Garitte 1954.

³⁷⁵ Ed. Papadopoulos-Kerameus 2001 [1907], 1.1–41.

of 11 October. We know that this entry was present in the Constantinopolitan calendar of the early ninth century because a copy of the Typikon of the Great Church surviving from Patmos (itself a ninth- or tenth-century manuscript) also includes Stephen the Sabaïte on this date. However, the Patmos entry adds the epithet *Graptos* (the ‘tattooed’) and lists his rank as ‘archbishop of Nicaea’.³⁷⁶ What the Patmos manuscript represents is apparently a reworking-in-progress of the Constantinopolitan calendar, originally based on that of Jerusalem, but subsequent to 843 and in light of the new heroes of Orthodoxy. One will note, especially, that the later Constantinopolitan *synaxaria* all list Theophanes Graptos on 11 October, who late in his life became Metropolitan of Nicaea.³⁷⁷ The earliest reference to this date for the memorial of Theophanes is in the *Life of Michael Synkellos*, and 11 October, conveniently, also happened to be the traditional date for the commemoration of the Nicaea II (787), which closed the first period of Iconoclasm.³⁷⁸

In other words, following Auzépy’s argument here, subsequent to 843 the patriarch Methodius ostensibly inserted into the calendar the commemoration date of Theophanes (11 October) – and that of Theodore Graptos (27 December) – on the basis of the *Life of Michael Synkellos*, in which Michael and the Graptoi are depicted as confessors and heroes in the cause of iconophilia. This reworking had a double benefit: it institutionalized the status of Michael and the Graptoi, especially as Constantinopolitan saints (since they were all three from Jerusalem), and it edged out Stephen the Sabaïte, who may himself have been an iconoclast.³⁷⁹ Moreover, to seal the deal, Stephen Mansūr of St Sabas, hymnographer and nephew of John (Mansūr) of Damascus, although unknown to the tenth-century Georgian translation of the Palestinian *synaxarion*, took the place of his earlier *Doppelgänger* Stephen the Sabaïte, alongside Theophanes Graptos on 11 October, in order to specify, in the case that there were *synaxaria* or *typika* still circulating (like that at Patmos) with the name ‘Stephen the Sabaïte’ on that day.³⁸⁰ This new Stephen brings, furthermore, his own additional benefit, not just as playing the role of ‘Stephen the Sabaïte’; namely, his presence in the liturgy obviously buttresses the iconophile claim on the legacy that last great Church Father, John of Damascus – that is, that the Mansūr family, far from the ‘Saracen-minded’ slander of the *Horos* of Hiereia, was in fact a pureblood iconophile family that represented, at the earliest point possible, the iconophile reaction to the dogma of Iconoclasm, and without

³⁷⁶ Auzépy 1994, 206.

³⁷⁷ Delehaye 1902, 129–132.

³⁷⁸ Cunningham 1991, 112–115.

³⁷⁹ Auzépy 1994, 208.

³⁸⁰ The completeness of this rubbing-out of his memory may show itself, negatively, in the absence of a Metaphrastic version of the *Life of Stephen the Sabaïte* (Auzépy 1994, 204–205).

any unnecessary acknowledgment that they were non-Constantinopolitan.³⁸¹ This is important, since it is not clear that any of John's works on icons were ever read in Constantinople during his lifetime nor even immediately thereafter.³⁸² Of course, that piece of information was not a part of the later re-working of the story.

Finally, as an additional benefit for Patriarch Methodios and the iconophiles after 843, Stephen Mansūr was a poet, like his much more famous uncle, John of Damascus, and as were his younger contemporaries Michael Synkellos and Theophanes and Theodore Graptos. These important *melchitai poetikoi* were able to contribute an orthodox, iconophile hymnographic legacy to the 'renaissance' idea of the ninth century in Constantinople. The collocation of iconophile poets also drew attention away from forgettable issues such as that Kosmas, one of the great poets of the eighth century, whose hymns were already incorporated into the Constantinopolitan liturgy, may himself have had Iconoclast sympathies.³⁸³ Regardless, it is worth emphasizing that, as with the anacreontic poetry mentioned above, hymnography in the late eighth and early ninth centuries was an almost exclusively Palestinian phenomenon.³⁸⁴

After hymnography, it should be obvious from the survey above that it was the hagiographical genres that found a high level of expression in Greek in the eastern monasteries during the ninth century. Whatever use may have been made (or not made) of hagiographical Lives of eastern monks at Constantinople, in their local setting these Lives had the value of solidifying the self-perception of the melkite community in the face of increasing persecution from Muslim authorities, especially in the first half of the ninth century. These hagiographical texts often took the form of martyrdom accounts, describing the 'neomartyrs' killed by Muslims for their faith.³⁸⁵ Many of the martyrs are associated with the late eighth century, but their Lives were written in the early to mid-ninth century, in the face of new waves of persecution. The melkite Lives were usually written in Greek or Arabic first, then translated into Georgian and Syriac quickly, depending on the specific monastic audience and capabilities of the translator or scribe.³⁸⁶ Often it is the case that the surviving Greek version was translated from a Georgian or Syriac version of what was originally an Arabic or even a Greek text.

The *Life of Michael the Sabaite* survives in Greek and Georgian, though it was originally written in Arabic in the ninth century: as a martyr under Caliph 'Abd al-

³⁸¹ Auzépy 1994, 209.

³⁸² Griffith 2006, 191–192.

³⁸³ Auzépy 1994, 183, 213; Kazhdan 1999–2006, 1.111–126; and Kazhdan and Gero 1989.

³⁸⁴ Mango 1991, 150; Cavallo 1995, 19.

³⁸⁵ Griffith 1998.

³⁸⁶ For a list of many of these martyrdom accounts, see Hoyland 1997, 346. For a discussion of individual Greek accounts, many of which are polemical in tone, see Hoyland 1997, 347–367.

Malik (685–705), he was buried at St Sabas and became a focus of later devotion.³⁸⁷ His *Life* refers to the context of his burial in this way: ‘Just as Jerusalem is the queen of all cities, so is the Lavra of Sabas the prince of all deserts, and so far as Jerusalem is the norm of other cities, so too is Mar Sabas the exemplar for other monasteries.’³⁸⁸ The Greek version of this *Life* is incorporated into the middle of the later *Life of Theodore of Edessa* (see below).

Another Greek *Life* is the *Life of St Bacchus* (after 787/8) which relates the story of a Muslim from Maiuma near Gaza who, under the influence of his Christian mother, converted to Christianity at St Sabas. When questioned by the Muslim emir, he spoke to them in Greek: ‘Ἄλλελουία, Ἄλλελουία, δόξα σοι ὁ Θεός, ‘Alleluia, Alleluia, Glory belongs to you, God.’ The emir did not understand him and asked him to respond in Arabic, which he refused to do. After his execution, Bacchus’ body was placed in a tomb at the Church of Sts. Cosmas and Damian in Jerusalem.³⁸⁹

The *Life of Stephen the Sabaïte* by Leontios of Damascus (from after 807) is one of the most famous of these Lives. As already mentioned, Stephen himself (c.725–794) is claimed as the author of two other hagiographical works from the same period, the *Martyrdom of the Twenty Sabaïte Martyrs* (d. 797) and the *Life of Romanos the Neomartyr* (d. 780). It is likely, however, that these are by his aforementioned *Doppelgänger* Stephen of Sabas.³⁹⁰ In the *Life* by Leontios, Stephen the Sabaïte travels all over the Holy Land visiting a number of melkite communities: it seems from these monastic travels that Arabic was just at the point of becoming the normal daily language of the Christian monks in the region. However, Stephen still greeted visitors in Greek. Indeed, his *Life* itself was written in Greek shortly after his death and survives in Greek, Georgian, and Arabic. Moreover, we know from the scribe of the Georgian version (which a ‘David’ made from the Arabic) that the Arabic version was made from the Greek in 903 by the monk Abba Yannah ibn al-Fakhūrī.³⁹¹

The *Martyrdom of the Twenty Sabaïte Martyrs* (BHG 1200) is the account of the martyrs killed during an Arab raid on the monastery in 797. As already mentioned, it is attributed to a ‘Stephen of Sabas’ and was probably written in the first decade of the ninth century. In the course of this *Martyrdom*, Stephen relates how a Syriac-

³⁸⁷ Peeters 1930; for the Georgian version, see Blanchard 1994.

³⁸⁸ Griffith 2006, 185.

³⁸⁹ Griffith 1998, 196–198; with Hoyland 1997, 346 n.41.

³⁹⁰ In Arabic Stephen is called ‘Stephen Mansūr’ and is said to be the nephew of John of Damascus: see the discussion of this in Hoyland 1997, 482 n.95. Compare the confusion that remains among modern histories: e.g. Brubaker and Haldon 2001, 227: ‘A *Life* of the Stephen who wrote the *Passio* of the twenty monks from the monastery of St Saba killed in 797, written by his pupil Leontios sometime after his death in 794.’ It is obviously impossible for Stephen (d. 794) to have written about Sabaïte martyrs from 797. The entry in *ODB* s.v. ‘Stephen Sabaïtes’, recognizes the problem but willfully conflates the two Stephens.

³⁹¹ Garitte 1980, 689. On the scribe David, see Tarchnišvili 1955, 123–126.

speaking monk was miraculously cured of his ‘barbaric speech’, after having failed in his attempt to pronounce Greek properly.³⁹² The *Life* was very popular and seems to have ended up in all the local languages of the monks (except, perhaps, Syriac...).³⁹³ The *Life of Romanos the Neomartyr* is likewise usually dated to the early ninth century, though it survives only in Georgian translation and could perhaps be somewhat later in composition, despite its attribution to Stephen of Sabas.³⁹⁴ It has been treated by some historians as an eye-witness of the events of the 770s.³⁹⁵ All of the hagiographical works just mentioned were originally written in Greek or were translated into Greek in the vibrant context of St Sabas during the eighth and ninth centuries.³⁹⁶

Moving back to northern Mesopotamia, the association between Palestine and Edessa should be explored further, since it allows us to see synchronic continuities with Palestine, but also to see the diachronic patterns from the early to late periods of this survey. An important example of continuity in this connection comes from the early ninth century. In 807–810 the Greek scholar Michael Synkellos – born c.760 in Jerusalem, trained there, though eventually moving on to Constantinople, where he died in 846 – was entrusted with the task of translating into Greek a treatise on Chalcedonian orthodoxy which he carried in person to the miaphysite Armenian Church.³⁹⁷ The treatise had been composed by Patriarch Thomas of Jerusalem,

³⁹² Hoyland 1997, 366.

³⁹³ Blake 1965, 375; Hoyland 1997, 367 n.98.

³⁹⁴ Ed. Khakhanov 1910; trans. Peeters 1911.

³⁹⁵ Brubaker and Haldon 2001, 225–226. Cf. Griffith 1998, 193–196.

³⁹⁶ Other works that could have been discussed include the aforementioned *Life of Gregory of Agrigento* by Leontios of St Sabas (c. 700; BHG 707; ed. Berger 1995, who argues for a ninth-century dating), the *Life of Alypios the Stylite* (mid-eighth century; BHG 64–66), and the *Life of David of Jerusalem/Thessaloniki* (720s; BHG 1217), which is said to have been translated from Syriac into Greek.

³⁹⁷ For the anonymous *Life of Michael the Synkellos* and his role in the iconoclastic controversy in Constantinople, see Cunningham 1991 and above. It seems, however, that the story the *Life* preserves, that Michael was sent to Rome to discuss the *Filioque* and was caught up in the iconoclastic controversy while in Constantinople, may not have any basis in reality (Auzépy 1994). Michael McCormick, in his recent study of the Basel Roll (the *Breve commemoratori de illis casis Dei*, a Carolingian-era inventory of the Holy Land, c.808), is rightly suspicious about the *Life*’s explanation for Michael’s departure from Jerusalem (1991, 181 n.85). I would suggest this suspicion could be pushed even further. The *Basel Roll* and its accompanying context, set out in detail by McCormick, indicate that the Patriarch Thomas was at the time attempting a direct rapprochement with the Roman pontiff (Leo III), possibly even reunion, without the mediation of Constantinople. Therefore, one possible explanation for Michael’s departure is that he left Jerusalem in protest following Thomas’ actions. (Michael might have deemed reunion with Rome worse even than casting his lot with the dangers of the capital!) A letter from Thomas asking for financial support was

and penned originally (it would seem) in Arabic by Theodore Abū Qurra, bishop of Ḥaran.³⁹⁸ Cyril Mango has highlighted the fact that the title of Michael's very popular rhetorico-grammatical manual claims it was propounded (σχεδιασθεῖσα) at Edessa and should probably be linked to Michael's work with Theodore Abū Qurrah in bringing Thomas' treatise on Orthodoxy to the attention of the Armenians.³⁹⁹ As Mango notes, there was likely a strong demand for such a treatise at Edessa even in the early ninth century, emphasizing again the continuous role of Greek in that city as well as its natural affinity with the broader eastern Christian world. The training evidenced in Michael's rhetorico-grammatical manual would have been gained in Palestine, particularly at St Sabas, where he was a monk for twelve years, according to his surviving *Life*.

As recorded in the *Martyrdom of the Twenty Sabaite Martyrs*, the Great Lavra of St Sabas was attacked in 797 and was, later, intermittently sacked after the death of Harun al-Rashid in 813. However, it does not seem that Theophanes' famous claim that the Palestinian Greek monks fled Jerusalem for Constantinople following the destruction of St Sabas is entirely correct.⁴⁰⁰ This flight or 'brain drain' of authors from St Sabas also led north to Edessa. A *Life of Theodore of Edessa* relates that Theodore (born c.776; bishop from 836) visited Constantinople during the reign of Michael III and Theodora (842–856), eventually retiring at some point thereafter to his home monastery of St Sabas, where he died.⁴⁰¹ The Greek text claims that Theodore 'conversed in the language of the Greeks, Syrians, and the Ishmaelites, in addition to that of the Persians'.⁴⁰² There is debate over whether this is an authentically Edessene *Life* – it claims to have been written *in situ* by his nephew, Basil of Emesa (died c.860) – or was instead pieced together by Palestinian émigrés living in Constantinople in the mid-ninth century.⁴⁰³ If it were written in Constantinople,

carried to Leo III in 807, just a year before the *Basel Roll* inventory was conducted (McCormick 2011, 170; 177). Further, the tenth-century melkite patriarch of Alexandria, Eutychius, claims that Thomas repaired the dome of the Anastasis/Holy Sepulchre church around 813 (McCormick 2011, 180). McCormick's conclusion that Thomas received the support he asked for thus appears justified. But the same evidence might also be used to explain the exodus of Michael and the Graptoi.

³⁹⁸ Trans. Lamoreaux 2005. For Michael's Greek version, see PG 97.1504–21. See also Griffith 1985.

³⁹⁹ Mango 1991, 154–155.

⁴⁰⁰ See Theophanes, *Chronicle* s.a. 813. Here Theophanes is repeating the mantra of the 'Palestinian lobby' in Constantinople (Auzépy 1994).

⁴⁰¹ See Vasiliev 1944 for an English translation and commentary.

⁴⁰² Griffith 2001b, 151 n.25.

⁴⁰³ Griffith 2001b and 1986b argue for Constantinople; Mango 1991 argues for Edessa.

it would provide even more evidence of direct connections between the capital and these outposts of Greek writing in the ninth century.⁴⁰⁴

On this topic, one might point again to the successful, if enigmatic, *Barlaam and Joasaph* romance (c.800).⁴⁰⁵ This work, long attributed to John of Damascus, relates a Hellenistic-Christian version of what was originally a Buddha legend in Sanskrit. Its surviving Greek form has clear Georgian and Arabic progenitors. This extant Greek version intriguingly draws inspiration from a number of other Greek works from eastern Christianity: the *Apology* of Aristeides, the *Chapters* of the Deacon Agapetus, the homilies of John Chrysostom, the *Life of Mary of Egypt*, the *Narrationes* of Pseudo-Nilus of Ancyra, the *Life of Catherine of Alexandria*, and John of Damascus himself.⁴⁰⁶ Moreover, Kazhdan has argued that there are narrative borrowings from *Barlaam and Joasaph* in the *Life of Theodore of Edessa*.⁴⁰⁷ Both were popular in Constantinople and Athos (and elsewhere) in later periods, but originally they both almost certainly emerged from melkite Greek circles in the ninth century, whether those circles happened to be located in Palestine and Edessa, or in exile at Constantinople. The vitality of Greek fiction seen through this narrative interaction of texts is striking, particularly during what was a nadir of Christian freedom in the Muslim Levant.

Finally, of the aforementioned Theodore Abū Qurra's extant corpus – Abū Qurra being the first Christian Arabic writer we know by name – fourteen treatises survive in Arabic, forty-three in Greek, and a number in Georgian. Theodore himself claims to have written thirty treatises in Syriac.⁴⁰⁸ According to tradition he was born in Edessa, educated at St Sabas, was for a time bishop of Ḥaran, and then settled finally back at St Sabas before his death. John Lamoreaux has disputed Theodore's time at Sabas, but it is nevertheless clear that he was connected to the Jerusalem Patriarchate as an apologist for Chalcedonian Christianity and that his theological interactions included Armenian Orthodox and Syrian Orthodox as well.⁴⁰⁹ Moreover, there was sufficient interest in his work among Greek speakers outside of eastern Christian circles to insure the survival of so many of his works in Greek, and among the libraries of Constantinople and Mt Athos as well.

⁴⁰⁴ There is also an extant Greek letter claiming to be from the Patriarchs of Alexandria, Antioch, and Jerusalem, written following a Council in 836, and addressed to the iconoclast emperor Theophilos (829–842) at Constantinople: see Munitiz 1997 and Griffith 2006, 185. On the Palestinian 'lobby' in Constantinople at this time, see Auzépy 1994, 213–216.

⁴⁰⁵ Ed. Volk 2006. See also Kazhdan 1988.

⁴⁰⁶ Guran 2012. See also Harris 1925.

⁴⁰⁷ Kazhdan 1988, 1202–1203.

⁴⁰⁸ Griffith 1986b, 124–125. See now Lamoreaux 2005 for an introduction and translation of nearly all of Theodore's works, in both Greek and Arabic. See also Lamoreaux 2002 for a discussion of his life and work.

⁴⁰⁹ Lamoreaux 2005, xi–xviii; 2002. See also Griffith 1993; 1997a.

However, we do not have to imagine this interest and readership to be based solely in Constantinople. There was significant traffic between Edessa, Jerusalem, and Sinai. The history of manuscripts at Sinai serves also the purpose of describing the social value of Greek among eastern Christians outside of the Byzantine empire. There has always been a rich library of Greek manuscripts at Sinai, but this library has recently grown significantly due to the cache of manuscripts and fragments (in numerous languages) discovered in 1975 and commonly labeled as the 'New Finds'. For instance, among the New Finds in Greek there is a ninth-century copy of the *Iliad* which includes a paraphrase of the epic that appears to be contemporary to the production of the manuscript, which the editor has dated to 841–860.⁴¹⁰ Very recently identified is a ninth-century collection of liturgical poems by John of Damascus, which appears to be by far the best witness to these poems.⁴¹¹ The oldest extant *Horologion* in Greek comes from Sinai, the colophon of which explains that the manuscript was copied in 863 at St Sabas.⁴¹² These texts show that the knowledge and value of Greek did not plummet in the ninth-century Christian East.

One could further cite, from both before and after the ninth century – in addition to famous texts such as *Codex Sinaiticus* – lesser-known treasures that demonstrate the continuity of Greek learning in the East during this period. For instance, among the New Finds is a seventh-century copy of John Klimakos' *Ladder* contemporary to the author himself (a copyist, John, wrote the colophon).⁴¹³ Known from before the New Finds is an eleventh-century copy of the *Taktikon* by Nikon of the Black Mountain (c.1025–c.1110), also contemporary to the author.⁴¹⁴ This latter text is the only surviving copy of an important compendium of Byzantine canonical and liturgical ordinances and serves as an indicator of the continued vitality of the scholarly networks traveling the axial route between Antioch and Sinai through St Sabas.

The Black Mountain (Gk. *Mavron Oros*; Arab. *Jebel Lukkām*), near Antioch, produced, especially in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, important Greek, Syriac, and Georgian liturgical and ecclesiastical texts. Brock has drawn attention to the Syriac manuscripts dated from 1023 to 1242 copied at the melkite monastery of St Panteleimon (St Elia) at the Black Mountain. These show evidence of a 'Byzantinization' of the Syriac rite, meaning that Constantinopolitan elements of the liturgy were being translated from Greek and inserted into the Chalcedonian Syriac liturgies of the region around Antioch, in an effort to bring them into conformity with Byzantium.⁴¹⁵ Similar processes were occurring in Georgian monasteries of

⁴¹⁰ *Sin. NF Gr. MT* 26; Parpulov 2011, 39; Apthorp 1999; Nicolopoulos 2003.

⁴¹¹ *Sin. NF Gr. MT* 5+56; Parpulov 2011, 40; Skrekas 2008.

⁴¹² Ed. Ajjoub 2004; Parpulov 2011, 40.

⁴¹³ *Sin. NF Gr. MT* 71; Parpulov 2011, 39.

⁴¹⁴ *Sin. Gr. MS* 441; Parpulov 2011, 39.

⁴¹⁵ Brock 1990. There were also Syrian Orthodox monasteries in the same region.

the same region and time (see below).⁴¹⁶ Therefore, it should be emphasized that merely from the extant manuscripts alone, one can see the continuity of copying and writing Greek from the ninth century to the thirteenth.

Most evocative of these networks are the wholesale translations made out of (and into) Greek at these centers. To take Sinai again as an example, the Syriac manuscripts that survive there are one of two major libraries without which we would lose about 80% of the pre-1000 manuscripts that have survived. The other, larger collection, was that of Deir al-Syrian in the Wadi Natrun which has already been discussed. But the manuscripts from Deir al-Syrian, fascinating as they are, come almost exclusively from the Syrian Orthodox community. At Sinai, we have the opportunity to view the preservation and continuity of a Syriac melkite community that worked alongside, and was to some degree coterminous with, the Greek community. For instance, prior to the New Finds at Sinai, no Syriac version of the *Lives* by Cyril of Scythopolis was known, but now we have in fragmentary form part of both the *Life of Sabas* and the *Life of Euthymius*, thanks to a ninth-century manuscript which, significantly, is a palimpsest with CPA underneath.⁴¹⁷ Also new is a Syriac translation of the *Life of Symeon Stylites the Younger* (dated to 828).⁴¹⁸ These demonstrate the cultural heritage of Greco-melkite Syria and Palestine that Syro-melkite Christians at Sinai claimed for themselves.

For example, one could point to the discovery among the New Finds of several folios of the East Syrian author Sahdona-Martyrius' *Book of Perfection*, a text written in the seventh century. The colophon of this manuscript says it was copied in Edessa in 837 for 'the shrine of St Moses on the holy mountain of Sinai'. The value of these New Finds lies in the discovery on site of pieces of the earliest dated manuscript that we know was specifically commissioned for St Catherine's.⁴¹⁹ Furthermore, it was copied in Edessa, highlighting the north-south axial route of manuscripts, and it was a text by an author with a complicated confessional profile.

The famous *Codex Climaci Rescriptus*, sold by Westminster College, Cambridge on auction at Sotheby's to the Green family of Oklahoma City in 2010, has also been officially tied to St Catherine's thanks to the New Finds. Previously it could be traced back no further than its purchase from a Cairo dealer in 1905 by the twin Scottish sisters Agnes and Margaret Smith, the subjects of a recent popular history entitled *Sisters of Sinai: How Two Lady Adventurers Found the Hidden Gospels* (Soskice 2009). *Codex Climaci Rescriptus* is a palimpsest that contains as its over-text a Syriac

⁴¹⁶ Djobadze 1976.

⁴¹⁷ Brock 2011, 45. On the 'New Finds' manuscripts in Syriac at Sinai, see the catalogue of Philothée 2008, along with Géhin 2009. On the new fragments found at Sinai, see the catalogue of Brock 1995.

⁴¹⁸ Brock 2011, 45.

⁴¹⁹ Brock 2011, 45; 2009. The manuscript was known prior to the New Finds through surviving portions housed in Strasbourg, St Petersburg, Milan, and Birmingham.

translation of John Klimakos' famous monastic text, the *Ladder* (again signifying the value of Greek writings for the Syriac community there). But the under-text in this case is in Christian Palestinian Aramaic.⁴²⁰ There are a number of CPA texts extant at Sinai, almost all of them palimpsestic in some form, which may suggest that by the ninth century the use of this language had died out, or that the manuscripts had been brought from an area where it was spoken, namely the monasteries of Palestine, and reused in Sinai.⁴²¹ Christian Arabic follows a similar pattern to Syriac among the Sinai manuscripts, though obviously without the tremendously early texts found there in Syriac and Greek. In the eighth and ninth centuries a major translation project was undertaken at Sinai to bring Greek and Syriac works into Arabic. Ninth-century translations of the Gospels and Paul's letters have turned up in the New Finds, as have numerous bilingual manuscripts with facing Arabic and Greek, including an early Psalter.⁴²² Of course, many of the same Greek authors and texts that were valuable to the melkite Syriac community, like Klimakos' *Ladder*, were also translated into Arabic.⁴²³

However, one might be so bold as to suggest that, despite the remarkable extent of translation activity from Greek into Syriac and Arabic at Sinai in the ninth and tenth centuries, the output of Georgian translators and scribes during this period throughout the region – at the same melkite centers of Sinai, the Black Mountain, and the monasteries in and around Jerusalem – may be the most undervalued piece of the puzzle, particularly for Byzantinists.⁴²⁴ I point this out in order to foreshadow the way in which Georgian translators and scribes closed the circle on the eastern Byzantine Commonwealth during this period by establishing themselves firmly, in the tenth century, on Mt Athos at the monastery of Iviron.⁴²⁵

More Georgian manuscripts from before 1000 have survived at Sinai than anywhere else.⁴²⁶ It is likely that Georgian monks were at Sinai from the sixth

⁴²⁰ *Sin. NF Syr. M 38*; Brock 2011, 46–47.

⁴²¹ Brock 2011, 46–47. However, CPA has been found among the texts of the Cairo Geniza, and must have had longevity somewhere until the twelfth century.

⁴²² *Sin. NF Arab. 14*; *Sin. NF Arab. 52*; Brock 2011, 48. Note also that Kashouh 2012 has argued that *Vat. Arab. 13* contains a pre-Islamic translation of the Gospels into Arabic. The manuscript itself is late seventh or early eighth century but possibly contains an early seventh-century translation. Griffith 2013 acknowledges Kashouh's important analysis of the manuscript but rejects the idea that the text it contains is pre-Islamic. Regardless, for the present argument it will be helpful to note that *Vat. Arab. 13* comes from St Sabas monastery and thus connects one of the earliest Christian Arabic manuscripts to the melkite networks I have been describing.

⁴²³ Brock 2011, 47–50.

⁴²⁴ For Georgian–Byzantine relations, see the still fundamental work of Toumanoff 1963.

⁴²⁵ See the new, excellent collection of articles on Georgian language and culture reprinted in Rapp and Crego 2012, especially Metreveli 2012 [1983].

⁴²⁶ Thomson 2011, 52.

century on, and, in the context of the present argument about the axial movement of manuscripts and scribes, it may not come as a surprise that the first example of written Georgian anywhere in the world is an inscription dated to 430 from Jerusalem.⁴²⁷ This connection between Palestine and Sinai is further exemplified by a Georgian collection of patristic homilies, a *polykephalon* designed for reading on feast days, preserved at Sinai but dated to 864 in the colophon by its scribe Macarius, who was working at the Lavra of St Sabas.⁴²⁸ In fact, we have numerous manuscripts explicitly translated or copied by monks in Palestine from the ninth and tenth centuries which are now in the Sinai library. These include a codex of Georgian translations of the hymns of Ephrem Syrus written at St Sabas by a monk George in around 900.⁴²⁹ Likewise, a slightly later, tenth-century Georgian version of the *Life of Euthymius* by Cyril of Scythopolis was donated to the monastery at Sinai by another George working in a monastery in Palestine.⁴³⁰

The Georgian monk John Zosime began his scribal career at St Sabas in 949, and had moved to Sinai by 973, translating numerous Greek biblical and hagiographical texts, while also copying works that were already in Georgian. He was fundamental to the later tradition of Georgian translation and scribal work, and his encyclopedic calendar of feast days in the eastern churches is our primary source for the early Jerusalem lectionary, which developed independently in Greek from that at Constantinople.⁴³¹ By the late tenth century, John the Iberian and his son Euthymios the Iberian (or Euthymios the Athonite; 963–1028), though born in Georgia, had established the monastery of Iviron on Mt Athos. Euthymios is said to have translated 160 works into Georgian, primarily from Greek.⁴³² One of these works was the entire *Fountain of Knowledge* by John of Damascus. He is even credited with translating the *Barlaam and Joasaph* romance from Georgian back into Greek. (As noted above, the Georgian version seems to have been translated not originally from the Greek but from Arabic.) It was long thought to have been the original work of John of Damascus, and continues to be published today in the Loeb Classical Library under his name.⁴³³ An illustrated copy of this text in Greek was produced at Iviron in the twelfth century, which complements a similarly illustrated manuscript of the Greek version held at the Jerusalem Patriarchate.⁴³⁴ These are

⁴²⁷ Rayfield 2010, 19.

⁴²⁸ *Sin. Geo. Codex* 32–57–33; Thomson 2011, 55; Gariotte 1956, 72–97.

⁴²⁹ *Sin. Geo. Codex* 97; Thomson 2011, 55; Gariotte 1956, 282–292.

⁴³⁰ *Sin. Geo. Codex* 43; Thomson 2011, 55; Gariotte 1956, 159–161.

⁴³¹ The most famous of his works is the compilation of liturgical calendars mentioned above: ed. and trans. Gariotte 1958.

⁴³² Rayfield 2010, 19.

⁴³³ See Lang 1955; 1957; 1966; with Kazhdan 1988. A new critical edition has been published among the spurious works of John of Damascus (Volk 2006).

⁴³⁴ *Gr. Patr. Stavrou* 42; presumably coming from St Sabas. See also Lang 1957.

only two of the 140 manuscript witnesses to the text, which, though very popular among Constantinopolitan readers, seems to have had its origins in the Palestinian monasteries of the early ninth century (whether or not John of Damascus translated it), and returned to the capital via Athos and not directly from the Orient.⁴³⁵ Thus, if this scenario is true, it means that within 300+ years, the process of translation of Greek works among eastern Christians fluent in other languages had come full circle. Whether or not Euthymios the Iberian was himself the one who completed the circle by translating *Barlaam and Joasaph* back into Greek, it is worth nothing that he died not on Mt Athos or in his native Georgia, but at Constantinople in the year 1028.⁴³⁶

Dumbarton Oaks possesses a partial eleventh-century Georgian *menaion* for the months of December, January, and February, which was edited by Garitte and published in *Le Muséon* in 1962. The colophon states that the book was produced by a John Dvali at the request of George Prochoros, founder of the monastery of the Holy Cross near Jerusalem. Robert Blake had already shown that this manuscript was indeed present at the Greek patriarchate in Jerusalem into the modern period where it was precisely described as 'fine and elegant, of the Athonite type, without ornamentation' by Tsagareli in his catalogue of 1883.⁴³⁷ Subsequently, this manuscript went missing until it was given to Dumbarton Oaks by the Bliss family in February of 1952. Among his posthumous papers, Blake (having died in 1950) published a note on the manuscript in 1960 saying that at an earlier point it had been in the possession of a Dr G. Eric Matson of Glendale, California.⁴³⁸

It is valuable also to note that one tenth-century Georgian Gospel lectionary from the New Finds is a palimpsest copied over a Coptic text (very few of which survive at Sinai). This text was, interestingly, copied by John Zosime himself and comes from the Jerusalem Georgian Lectionary.⁴³⁹ Blake long ago made a related observation by noting the presence of Coptic letter forms in Greek transcriptions within Georgian texts copied on Mt Sinai: that is, that a scribe, apparently comfortable in Greek and Coptic, was also able (at the very least) to copy a text in Georgian. Blake connects to this phenomenon – though one could argue that the two phenomena are distinct – the tendency in the tenth century and later for Greek words appearing in Georgian manuscripts to be transliterated into Georgian characters rather than kept in the

⁴³⁵ Kazhdan 1988.

⁴³⁶ See *ODB*, s.v. 'Euthymios the Iberian.' Also worthy of note is the dearth of Armenian manuscripts resident at or originating from Sinai. There were certainly more available there in the tenth century than have survived, since two old ones were reused for a Georgian palimpsest in that century: see Thomson 2011, 56.

⁴³⁷ Garitte 1964, 31.

⁴³⁸ Garitte 1964, 29.

⁴³⁹ *Sin. Geo. N.* 71; Alek'size et al. 2005, 424–425; Thomson 2011, 57.

original Greek.⁴⁴⁰ Does this signal a decline in the knowledge of Greek in this later period among Georgian copyists on Sinai? The proliferation of new translations from Greek into Georgian during the ninth to twelfth centuries suggests that, No, knowledge of Greek, at least among a certain scribal workforce, was not declining. However, it may have been the case that these allographic situations became more frequent and that fewer scribes who knew Greek were copying Georgian translations made long ago, so that when they reached a Greek word, they had only the very minimum capability to make sense of it.⁴⁴¹

As a final example of these connections, the translation history of the *Life of John of Damascus* touches on a number of points in the preceding discussion.⁴⁴² The colophon to the Georgian version by Ephrem Mtsiré (or ‘Ephrem the Lesser’) of Kastana (a monastery at the Black Mountain) says that he made his translation from a now lost Greek version by a Samuel of Adana (a dependency of Antioch). Samuel had based his Greek version, in turn, on an Arabic original by a Michael of St Symeon (at the Wondrous Mountain, outside Antioch). The Greek intermediate translation by Samuel is lost. However, the Arabic of Michael, dated precisely to 4 December 1085, survives.⁴⁴³

In a long preface to the work Michael claims that no Greek or Arabic *Life* of John had been written which was available to him. But we know this was not the case. There was already a famous double-life of John of Damascus and Kosmas the Melode written by John VII Patriarch of Jerusalem in 964–966.⁴⁴⁴ John VII says that he made the Greek version from a pre-existent Arabic version, and it is clear from a comparison of Michael’s and John VII’s work that Michael used, in constructing his new Arabic *Life* supposedly from scratch, the same basic Arabic *Life* that John VII himself had translated from over a century previous.

Thus, putting all of this together, it is clear that 1) by the mid-tenth century an Arabic biography of John of Damascus was available in Jerusalem, that 2) in the 960s John VII translated it into Greek, that 3) the Arabic *Life* was in circulation in the multilingual melkite monasteries of Antioch in the 1080s, when Michael of St Symeon used it for his Arabic *Life*, that 4) Michael’s version was translated from Arabic to Greek between 1085 and 1103 (a very short window), 1103 being the date of the death of Ephrem Mtsiré who 5) translated the Greek into Georgian and wrote his colophon (obviously) sometime before his death. Therefore, merely from the evidence of John of Damascus’ various *Lives* alone, the transmission of texts via

⁴⁴⁰ Blake 1932c.

⁴⁴¹ See the new collection of studies on allography in the Mediterranean world: Pataridze et al. 2013; also the studies on Garshuni in volume 17.1 (2014) of *Hugoye*.

⁴⁴² For what follows, see Flusin 1989.

⁴⁴³ The Arabic version was edited by Baša 1912.

⁴⁴⁴ The manuscript itself is of the late tenth century (*Vienna philol. gr.* 158; Hunger et al. 1961–1994, 1.261); ed. PG 94.429–490.

multiple languages shows, first, that a solid knowledge of Greek was present among melkite communities (and possibly neighboring miaphysite communities) from the mid-tenth century into the eleventh century and even up to the beginning of the twelfth century. It also reinforces the picture of the Black Mountain as a node of scribal and translation activity between the eleventh and twelfth centuries.

When combined with the evidence of new Greek hagiography from the late eighth and early ninth centuries, the copying and translation work being done at Edessa, St Sabas, and Sinai in the ninth and tenth centuries (including a Syriac translation of the *Iliad* at Edessa; and a new Greek copy of it, with prose paraphrase at Sinai), and the Georgian translation (and even Greek back-translation) being done at St Sabas, Sinai, Antioch, and Iviron on Athos (including *Barlaam and Joasaph* multiple times), it is impossible to argue for anything but a straight continuity of Greek knowledge and scribal activity in the ‘Byzantine Orient’, right through the period of the ‘Macedonian Renaissance’ that was occurring in the capital. Of course, this continuity is clearest when one looks at the liturgical traditions. As shown above, the Black Mountain was crucial to the ‘Byzantinization’ of the Syriac melkite rite: Greek elements from the capital were translated into Syriac and incorporated into the local liturgy. At the end of the eleventh century, Nikon of the Black Mountain wrote a letter in Greek mentioning the very Samuel of Adana who had translated Michael’s Arabic *Life of John of Damascus* into Greek, as mentioned in Ephrem’s colophon.⁴⁴⁵ Nikon, originally from Constantinople, was involved in the Byzantinization of the local Antiochene liturgical rites. As already noted, the only copy of his *Taktikon* survives at Sinai. Importantly, we see through his letter that he was the contemporary of Michael, Samuel, and Ephrem Mtsiré, and that they were all, at two removes or less, connected to one another.

To further underline the point, it is the Georgian evidence from this period that shows the connection most clearly. Ephrem Mtsiré, writing at the end of the eleventh century, often notes in his numerous prefaces and colophons the books he was making use of at St Symeon on the Wondrous Mountain. (Ephrem authored and translated numerous texts, including Pseudo-Dionysios the Areopagite, Basil the Great, and John of Damascus.) At one point he specifically acknowledges the generous gift of 420 books made by Patriarch Theodore III of Antioch (1034–1042) and how it enriched the library: ‘among [Theodore’s gift] there is not one hymnal, but only books for reading, both profane and ecclesiastical’.⁴⁴⁶ It is not hard to imagine that this was perhaps the best working library for scholar-monks in the eleventh and twelfth centuries in the region of Antioch, comparable at the same time to St Catherine’s at Mt Sinai or Iviron on Mt Athos, and that translation from and into Greek, as well as correction of liturgical texts based around Greek manuscripts from Constantinople, was going on continuously. In fact, it is quite

⁴⁴⁵ Flusin 1989, 54 n.1.

⁴⁴⁶ Flusin 1989, 55 n.1.

clear that, though they were all working with different languages, Nikon of the Black Mountain (Greek; with Syriac-speaking associates), Michael of St Symeon (Arabic), Samuel of Adana (Arabic and Greek), and Ephrem Mtsiré (Greek and Georgian) were rubbing shoulders in the same monastic library and comparing notes.

Further, Ephrem Mtsiré even suggests to us what kind of notes they were comparing: he addresses the scribal issues of marginal glosses/commentary and punctuation, explaining that the Greeks had a very good system for annotating texts and bringing attention to key passages; in a similar vein, he complains that previous Georgian translators were not rigorous or consistent in their use of punctuation, and he sets out guidelines for proper usage.⁴⁴⁷ He further dares to correct, in his own translation of the *Fountain of Knowledge* by John of Damascus, the previous translation by Euthymios the Iberian, father of Georgian monasticism on Mt Athos. (A translation which would have traveled from Iviron eastward to the Black Mountain between 1028 and 1103.) Ephrem corrects the master with tact, presuming a faulty manuscript tradition, but Ephrem's primary point is that Euthymios' translation was not exact enough with respect to the Greek. From this perspective, we can understand why he would criticize the Greek translation of Samuel of Adana from Michael's Arabic *Life of John of Damascus*, saying that it was 'too adorned'.

Thus, the project of translation from Greek into Georgian at Antioch seems to have worked against stylistic embellishment for the most part and erected a system of rules and standards for their translators and scribes. Indeed, the Georgians were well aware of the influential metaphrastic movement of paraphrastic elaboration in Constantinople that had flourished a century before. Ephrem Mtsiré defines literary paraphrase of received Christian texts in the following words:

We have heard it said that books were embellished by Simeon Logothete and other scholars, but it is necessary to know which books can be adorned, and for which books this is impossible. For if they (scil. the Greek metaphrasts) find a Life or a Martyrdom, a eulogy or even some written account in a rustic and inappropriate style, then they may stylistically enhance it, ornament it and this is called 'metaphrase', that is, ornamentation. And they do this when the author of the eulogy is uncultivated and does not rank among the saints as is the case for most Acts of the saints, which were written by the servants who shared their cell. In these cases, they can enhance the work using a discourse such that it is said to be by the same person, and does not cut out any of the details, nor adds any. But the works of saints and the writings of the orthodox Fathers no one dares to touch, just as if they were the holy Gospel and the Epistles of Saint Paul, even if they were written in a simple style: no scholarly or orthodox writer dares, unless he is stupid, or rather heretical and apostate from the Church⁴⁴⁸

⁴⁴⁷ Flusin 1989, 56 n.2.

⁴⁴⁸ Quoted from Flusin 1989, citing Tarchnišvili 1955, 68.

This seriousness with regard to Greek in the eastern Mediterranean may also have had resonance in the capital. As Flusin pointed out, it is precisely at this time that Theodore Balsamon, titular Patriarch of Antioch, though resident in Constantinople, responded to the question of Mark of Alexandria as to whether Orthodox (melkite) Christians can use other languages for their liturgy.⁴⁴⁹ His answer is that they certainly can, citing Paul's admonition in the book of Romans that God is not only the God of the Jews but of the Gentiles also (e.g. Rom. 3:29–30). However, in making use of their native languages, they must always have faithful Greek versions at hand of whatever text they are reading out in the church, so that the accuracy of their versions, be they Georgian, Syriac, Arabic, or Armenian, can be checked first-hand against the Greek.

In the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, such trends largely continue. The Liturgy of Saint James, the local rite of the Jerusalem church, continues to appear in new Greek manuscripts at Sinai from the ninth century up to the fourteenth century, alongside Arabic and Syriac manuscripts of the same.⁴⁵⁰ The Liturgy of Saint Mark, native to the Chalcedonians of Alexandria, also appears at Sinai up to the thirteenth century. Likewise, the Liturgy of Saint Peter, native to Byzantine southern Italy, having been brought to Mt Athos in a Greek version by 950, made its way to Sinai and continued to be copied there into the thirteenth century.⁴⁵¹ All three liturgies, in addition to the Byzantine rite of Saint John Chrysostom, were being copied in Greek, often including commentaries or glosses in Arabic and Syriac, at Sinai at the same time.

Interestingly, alongside this interest in preserving Greek liturgies, the number of Syriac manuscripts copied at Sinai in the thirteenth century far outstrips the numbers copied in any century before or after: 193 Syriac manuscripts (not including the New Finds) can be placed firmly in that century alone. Joseph Nasrallah connected this surge in Syriac copying and translation work to the conjunction of the Crusades, the Mongol invasions, and the resultant influx of Syrian monks, ousted from their own monasteries, into the monastery of St Catherine.⁴⁵² While Arabic continued to grow in importance in the Palestinian and Syrian melkite communities – a trend that began in the late eighth century, as evidenced by Theodore Abū Qurra among others – Greek nevertheless remained an identifying marker during the Crusader/Mamluk period.⁴⁵³ This appears to be a move in opposition to the Latin kingdoms – dovetailing with the rise of Syriac at Sinai due to the same forces – but the continuity of Greek comes also from an acknowledged association between the

⁴⁴⁹ Flusin 1989, 61; citing Balsamon, *Responsa ad interrogationes Marci*, ed. in PG 138.957B. See also Nasrallah 1987, 165 n.43.

⁴⁵⁰ Nasrallah 1987, 165; *Sin. Gr. 1040* (fourteenth century).

⁴⁵¹ Nasrallah 1987, 178 n.97.

⁴⁵² Nasrallah 1987, 168.

⁴⁵³ Pahlitzsch 2006; 2001.

Antiochene and Jerusalem patriarchates and Constantinople, strong evidence of which appears from the eighth century onward, though it is presaged in the early sixth-century purges by Justinian and Mar Sabas.

It is in the course of this heady mixture of languages, identities, confessions, and patterns of worship that one can view, perhaps, the literary interest in the Holy Land which grew among Constantinopolitan writers of the Komnenian empire of the twelfth century: specifically, Constantine Manasses' *Hodoiporikon* (1160),⁴⁵⁴ John Phokas' *Concise Description of the Holy Land* (prob. 1177 or 1195),⁴⁵⁵ and the numerous *proskynetaria* ('pilgrim circuits') from the Komnenian and Palaiologan periods.⁴⁵⁶ These texts all attest to the persistent connection that was felt in Byzantium between the Greek world in the capital and the Greek world among the Christians of the East.

VIII. CONCLUSION

At this point, after a long and necessarily selective history of Greek in the East, it is worth trying to return to the question of language and identity. I attempted early in this study to engage Fergus Millar's bold claims about the role of Greek in eastern Christian identity-formation, particularly as regards the early period of Syriac language and culture (second to fourth centuries). In his most recent work on the subject, especially the article 'The Evolution of the Syrian Orthodox Church in the Pre-Islamic Period: From Greek to Syriac?' (2013b), it has become clearer that many of his conclusions are similar to those in the present study as regards the status of Greek in the formation of doctrinal divisions among different Christian groups in Late Antiquity. Millar writes,

What we are concerned with was not in origin an ethnic or linguistic movement, but a profound doctrinal, or Christological, division, formulated by theologians and bishops writing in Greek, and stimulated above all by the fateful use of the term 'in two natures' which was included in the Definition of Faith adopted (under imperial pressure) at the Council of Chalcedon of 451 CE.⁴⁵⁷

⁴⁵⁴ This verse composition stems from the embassy of the *sebastos* John Kontostephanos to Palestine, which arose from a dispute about patriarchal succession. Ed. Horna 1904; trans. Aerts 2003.

⁴⁵⁵ Ed. PG 133.923–962; trans. Stewart 1889.

⁴⁵⁶ On these texts and their contexts, see Mullett 2002b.

⁴⁵⁷ Millar 2013b, 44.

I agree that Greek was not primarily a badge of ethnic or linguistic identity; nor, at least in the early period, was Syriac, nor (it seems) was Coptic for that matter.⁴⁵⁸

The major distinction between Millar's most recent work and the present study lies in the differing *semiotics* of doctrinal divisions: how can the emergence and development of the early Christian churches in the East be understood through the trajectories of the interaction between Greek and autochthonous languages in the region? Millar's axioms of 'extensive bilingualism' and 'regular translation of texts' in the introduction to his article on the Syrian Orthodox (Millar 2013b, 45) lead to '... the extensive, detailed, and concrete evidence for the use of Syriac on the "orthodox" [i.e. Syrian Orthodox] side and the contrast with the Chalcedonian identity as expressed in Greek in Syria,' in his conclusion from the same article (2013b, 91). In other words, Millar's opening assertion about the multi-faceted role of language in identity-formation – drawing on the articles in Romeny 2010 above all – is salutary and agrees with the evidence presented above. However, the conclusions resulting from that statement, about the abrupt shift in the sixth century toward sectarian language use and identity-formation, do not fit the emergent patterns *within multiple eastern Christian groups* which may be construed as daughter churches of the earliest Greek-speaking and -writing Christians.

I can formulate this important distinction between our interpretations in three areas. First, I do not feel Millar has gone nearly late enough to make such claims: there is, for instance, a remarkable resurgence of Greek among eastern churches (though not in Egypt) from the early seventh to the mid-ninth century, especially among Syriac writers (both East and West).

Second, while I have attempted to give some account of this resurgence above, it may even be more significant for the philhellenism it inspired among Georgian translators, scribes, and monk-scholars in the same and subsequent centuries. Through foundational eastern Christian texts like the works of John of Damascus, this resurgence comes full circle back to a Byzantine Greek context through the Iviron Lavra on Mt Athos and continues into the thirteenth century.

Third, Millar's exclusive focus (at least in Millar 2013b) on the Syrian Orthodox tradition has perhaps obscured the continuing value of Greek among East Syrian Christians and, from the other direction, obscured the important evidence for the use of Syriac among Chalcedonians in the East (the 'melkites').⁴⁵⁹ For this latter point, it could be noted that Millar has not addressed the evidence of CPA among Chalcedonian Christians in the Holy Land, extending from the fifth to the twelfth century, which is an important witness to the vitality of the Jerusalem lectionary,

⁴⁵⁸ On Coptic national identity in Late Antiquity, see Wipszycka 1992, cited by Millar 2013b, 48 n.16. See also, more generally, Maas 2001.

⁴⁵⁹ On Chalcedonian Syriac see Roey 1972. On the use of Syriac among Chalcedonian Maronites in this period, see Vailhé 1900–1902; 1906; and Tannous forthcoming.

not in Greek but Aramaic.⁴⁶⁰ Moreover, outside Jerusalem and Sinai (where Greek was always liturgically privileged), the dominant language for Chalcedonian liturgy in Late Antiquity was always Syriac, and in the later periods, especially after the Byzantine reconquest of Antioch in 969, it was Syriac, Arabic, and Georgian.⁴⁶¹ But, as I have attempted to show, even amidst the sharp rise in prominence of Arabic and Georgian, scribes in these languages were consulting the Greek and Syriac versions where available and in many cases were re-translating (straight from the Greek) texts that they felt had not been handled properly by their predecessors.⁴⁶² Furthermore, even in the leading Chalcedonian centers of Greek in the East, like St Sabas and Sinai, whether through liturgy or translation work, Greek is always accompanied by ample signs of engagement with other eastern Christian languages.

Therefore, I would argue in response to Millar that it is simply not sufficient to posit a sharp divergence between Syriac and Greek in the sixth century, for instance, and be done with the question. In fact, one could argue that the most interesting evidence for the questions Millar addresses actually appears only in the seventh century, when we have Maronite (i.e., monothelite-Chalcedonian), Syrian Orthodox, Church of the East, and Georgian writers all developing their own theological distinctives with direct reference to Greek, especially the Greek Bible (e.g., Harklean New Testament), liturgy (e.g., Jerusalem lectionary and *menaion*), and authoritative theological and monastic writers (e.g., new translations of Basil of Caesarea, Severus of Antioch, and John Klimakos). It should therefore come as no surprise that in this environment John of Damascus, an Arab Christian who had worked directly for the Caliph, chose to write what remains an enormous corpus of writings entirely in Greek. This is not coming, I would argue, from any Constantinopolitan allegiance but from a deep and sophisticated knowledge of Greek, the language that he acquired as a young monk, or perhaps even spoke at home from birth. This choice to write in Greek was made in the midst of a Syriac, Arabic, Georgian, and Greek multilingual monastic environment which was simultaneously influencing and being influenced by the liturgy.

In his most recent work Millar is more cautious in generalizing about language use as a marker of identity-formation (2013b, 48). This is a subtle shift from his earlier work (esp. 1998) and in line, I would agree, with current scholarship on the complex language dynamics of Late Antiquity in, for example, Egypt, a region which has been closely examined in the past decade. However, it may be necessary to rework and adapt some generalizations about identity for the sake of

⁴⁶⁰ See Leeming 2003, 240–241, as used by Galadza 2013, 62–64.

⁴⁶¹ Galadza 2013, 64: ‘Although the provenance of the extant liturgical manuscripts is very difficult to determine, colophons of most Syriac melkite liturgical manuscripts indicate they were copied in parts of Syria and Cappadocia within the Antiochene Patriarchate, not Jerusalem.’

⁴⁶² Again, on this subject see Brock 1990.

understanding better the literary history of the period. There were clearly internal literary traditions in the late antique East for which Greek was only an ancillary (or even a subordinate) element. Such literary traditions – isolated from Greek by circumstance or by choice – have been well researched in the case of Ephrem and Aphrahat. But this scenario also holds for writers after Chalcedon like Jacob of Serugh who, though usually classed as Syrian Orthodox, is much less concerned about theological-denominational identity than his contemporaries Philoxenos of Mabbug (also writing in Syriac) and Severus of Antioch (writing in Greek).⁴⁶³ In that sense Jacob of Serugh resembles much more closely his younger contemporary Romanos the Melode, writing in Greek and in Constantinople (though originally from Emesa). Like Jacob, Romanos' primary engagements with language were not related to his doctrinal commitments but to his artistic incorporation of the Syriac exegetical and poetical traditions.⁴⁶⁴ In other words, it may seem hard to believe, but the literary history of the sixth century, when taken as a whole, demonstrates that language was not always a marker of sectarianism but that new, hybrid combinations of languages and authorial careers were producing innovations in literature well beyond anything easily captured under the term 'identity'.

The argument of this study has thus been that Greek among eastern Christians was a double-edged sword. While it is true that Greek was a language of prestige throughout the long period under discussion, it is equally true that Greek rarely appears in the literary history of the 'Byzantine Orient' without being accompanied by another language indigenous to eastern Christianity. Therefore, the triumphalists on both sides of this debate are unable to explain (to my satisfaction, at least) the complexity that appears in the literary and manuscript history. For the early period, from 200–500, one has to imagine away the Greek–Syriac bilingualism of Edessa, or to diminish the role of Syriac entirely, in order to link the prestige of Greek to Roman power as a *Reichssprache* throughout the late antique East. For the later period, from 800–1200, historians of Greek literature have tended to shift the focus to Constantinople, away from Palestine, Antioch, Sinai, and other centers, because it suits the historiographical fascination with Iconoclasm, and the traditional narrative of waves of 'renaissance' (Macedonian, Komnenian, Palaiologan), to the detriment of the story of the continuity of Greek language, literature, and liturgy outside of the Byzantine Empire.

But the question remains: how do we connect the literary history of Byzantium with the literary history of the Christian East? Is it enough to show the continuity of Greek knowledge and 'social presence' outside Constantinople, Asia Minor,

⁴⁶³ I disagree with Millar 2013b, 61 on this point: while there are a handful of references to Jacob's confessional affiliation in his letters (Albert 2004), the assumption of contemporary and later Syrian Orthodox historians that he was staunchly anti-Chalcedonian does not come across strongly in his own poetry.

⁴⁶⁴ On the similarities between these two figures, see Johnson 2013.

and mainland Greece? The inherent danger in this question is the suggestion that Greek deserves a pride of place at all, especially as new literary histories were blossoming in the native languages of Christians in these regions. However, for the sake of understanding the role of Greek among such cultures – which is a legitimate framework of historical inquiry without intentional political or ecclesiastical subtext – it deserves to be emphasized that there is a clear dynamism that is present in the use of Greek among eastern Christians from 200–1200. This is true for new works being written up to the mid-ninth century, but also for the innumerable translations being made up through the twelfth century into and out of a language, Greek, that one might otherwise assume to be exhausted (or at best static) by this point outside of Byzantium proper. While I am ready to acknowledge with Millar that the rise of Christianity in the Near East did not *necessarily* entail a rise in Syriac (Millar 1998, 176), it would prove overly stubborn to suggest that the cross-pollination between Syriac and Greek (or Coptic and Greek, or Georgian and Greek, or Arabic and Greek, etc.) was not crucial to the formation of both literary histories during Late Antiquity and Byzantium. In fact, as should be obvious from the study above, it is impossible to discuss these literary histories in isolation from one another if one hopes to do justice to the surviving corpora of eastern Christianity.

I would venture to suggest that connecting Byzantine literature more firmly to other eastern Christian languages would be especially salutary in moving later Greek literary history into a new phase of research and scholarship. To answer Kazhdan's question with which I began this study, No, we cannot imagine Byzantine literature without John of Damascus.⁴⁶⁵ But, at the same time, we cannot understand John of Damascus without Syriac and Arabic. One thing requires the other. Semiticists and scholars of Coptic, Armenian, and Georgian have long insisted upon the need for Greek to understand their own literary histories. The opportunity for Byzantinists at this transition point is to recognize the manifold benefits that come from investigating eastern Christian languages and literatures – seeing how Greek engaged and was enriched by those languages – and to begin claiming them as their own.

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⁴⁶⁵ Which was his own answer to the question as well, though for different reasons: Kazhdan 1999–2006, 1.75–93. On Kazhdan's literary history compared with other trends in contemporary scholarship, see Mullett 2002a.

ABBREVIATIONS

BHG Halkin, François. 1969. *Bibliotheca Hagiographica Graeca*. 3rd ed. Subsidia Hagiographica 47. Brussels: Société des bollandistes.

BO Assemani, Joseph Simon. 1719–1730. *Bibliotheca Orientalis Clementino-Vaticana*. 3 vols. Rome: Sacra Congregatio de Propaganda Fide.

Copt.Enc. Atiya, Aziz Suryal, ed. 1991. *The Coptic Encyclopedia*. 8 vols. New York: Macmillan.

CPA Christian Palestinian Aramaic.

CPG Geerard, M. et al., ed. 1974–2003. *Clavis Patrum Graecorum*. 5 vols. Turnhout: Brepols.

CSCO Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium (Leuven, etc.: Peeters, etc., 1903–).

DOP Dumbarton Oaks Papers.

GCS Die griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller der ersten Jahrhunderte (Leipzig and Berlin).

GEDSH Brock, Sebastian P., Aaron M. Butts, George A. Kiraz, and Lucas Van Rompay, ed. 2011. *The Gorgias Encyclopedic Dictionary of the Syriac Heritage*. Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press.

GRBS *Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Studies* (Cambridge, MA, 1958–).

IGLS Jalabert, Louis, and René Mouterde, eds. 1929–. *Inscriptions Grecques et Latines de La Syrie*. 21 vols. Bibliothèque Archéologique et Historique 12, 32, 46, 51, 61, 66, 78, 89, 104, 113–115, 183, 187, 194–195. Paris: P. Geuthner.

OCP *Orientalia Christiana Periodica* (Rome, 1935–).

ODB Kazhdan, A. et al., ed. 1991. *Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium*. 3 vols. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

PG Migne, J.P., ed. 1857–1866. *Patrologiae cursus completus: Series Graeca*. 166 vols. Paris.

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